

The *Moral Pieces* by Theodore II Laskaris

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The *Moral Pieces* (Ἐπιτομαὶ ἠθικαί) have a special place among the works of the Nicaean crown prince, emperor, and philosopher Theodore II Laskaris (1221/22–1258). This collection of twelve essays is a window into the thought-world of Theodore Laskaris at a critical juncture of his life and contributes to a fuller understanding of this little-studied Byzantine author and political figure. The *Moral Pieces* are also a rare example of a medieval literary and philosophical work in which a bereaved husband mourns the passing of his wife. Here I offer a critical edition and translation of the *Moral Pieces*, and tackle relevant questions regarding the date of the work, its historical and literary contexts, and its manuscript transmission.

Date and Historical Context

According to title headings in Ambrosianus gr. C 308 inf. (917) and Paris, BnF, Cod. gr. 1193, the *Moral Pieces* were occasioned by the death of Theodore Laskaris's wife Elena. Since scholars have not yet established the date of her death, the date of composition of the *Moral Pieces* has not been determined either. In 1908 Jean Pappadopoulos (Ioannes Papadopoulos) rightly drew attention to some of Theodore Laskaris's letters where the author refers to a recent bereavement: the death of his spouse. His inference, however, that Elena died "entre 1249 et 1254, et selon toute probabilité dans les derniers mois de 1250" is based on a misunderstanding of the chronology of the *History* of George

Akropolites.¹ A rigorous scrutiny of the letters of Theodore Laskaris and a consideration of the context of Akropolites' historical work can lead us to the probable year of Elena's death and hence toward the date of the *Moral Pieces*.

Elena was the daughter of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Asen II (1218–1241) and his Hungarian wife Maria.² Her marriage to Theodore was the result of a carefully planned alliance. In his *History* Akropolites writes that a Nicaean embassy to Bulgaria proposed

✦ Panagiotis Agapitos has generously offered a number of helpful comments on the edition and the translation. I am particularly grateful for his insights into the new trends in Byzantine philology. I would like also to thank Joseph Munitiz, with whom I discussed my work at an early stage of its gestation, Margaret Mullett, Michael McGann, and Alice-Mary Talbot. After submission of the article, Luigi Tartaglia of the University of Naples informed me of his *editio princeps* published in an Italian journal (see n. 81). Some salient differences between Tartaglia's edition and mine should be mentioned. I have followed different editorial principles by choosing to preserve the characteristic features of medieval Greek orthography; punctuation breaks in key passages of the text are different; the introduction here offers a detailed historical, biographical, and literary contextualization of the *Moral Pieces*.

1 J. B. Pappadopoulos, *Théodore II Lascaris, empereur de Nicée* (Paris, 1908), 33. See also *ibid.*, 164, where he entitles the *Moral Pieces* as *Réflexions sur la vie humaine*.

2 Prosopographical data on Elena has been gathered by I. Bozhilov, *Familiata na Asenevtsi: genealogiia i prosopografia* (Sofia, 1985), 102–3, whose statement that "Elena reigned between 1254 and 1258 as Byzantine empress" needs to be revised in the light of the dating of her death discussed below.

the engagement of Theodore to Elena during a period of rapprochement aimed against the Latin empire of Constantinople. Theodore is said to have been at that time in the eleventh year of his life (in other words, he was ten years of age), while his future bride was in her ninth year (that is, she was eight years old).³ As Theodore Laskaris was born in late 1221 or in early 1222, the negotiations for the betrothal would have started in 1232.⁴ Three years later, in the spring of 1235, the marriage was solemnly celebrated in Lampsakos on the Asiatic coast of the Sea of Marmara.⁵ Elena's mother and high clergy from Bulgaria took part in the marriage ceremony, which was accompanied by an official act elevating the head of the Bulgarian Church to autocephalous patriarch, with the express approval of the four Orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.⁶ Immediately after the marriage, John III Vatatzes, Theodore's father, and Ivan Asen II campaigned jointly in Thrace, wresting large territories in the area from the Latins, and proceeded to an assault on Constantinople in 1235–36.⁷

3 §31, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg and P. Wirth (Leipzig, 1973), 1:48–49. For a fuller discussion on the issues surrounding the date of the proposed betrothal, see D. Angelov, "Theodore II Laskaris, Elena Asenina and Bulgaria," in *The Medieval Bulgarian and "the Others" / Srednovekovniat Bŭlgarin i "Drugite"*, ed. A. Nikolov and G. Nikolov (Sofia, 2013), 273–97.

4 On Theodore's date of birth, see the observations of R. Macrides, *George Akropolites: The History* (Oxford, 2007), 276.

5 §33, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 1:50–51. The date of the marriage emerges from the chronology of the joint Nicaean-Bulgarian assault on Constantinople in the summer and autumn of 1235 abundantly witnessed by western sources. For a synopsis of the sources, see J. S. Langdon, "The Forgotten Byzantino-Bulgarian Assault and Siege of Constantinople, 1235–1236, and the Breakup of the *Entente Cordiale* between John III Ducas Vatatzes and John Asen II as a Background to the Genesis of the Hohenstaufen-Vatatzes Alliance of 1242," *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina* 4 (1985): 122 n. 2. On the negotiations preceding the marriage, see G. Cankova-Petkova, "Griechisch-bulgarische Bündnisse in den Jahren 1235 und 1246," *Byzantinobulgarica* 3 (1969): 49–79, esp. 52–61.

6 V. Laurent, *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. 1, *Les actes des patriarches*, fasc. 4, *Les Regestes de 1208 à 1309* (Paris, 1971), no. 1282. See also G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (Oxford, 1956), 437; G. Cankova-Petkova, "Vosstanovlenie bolgarskogo patriarshestva v 1235 g. i mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie bolgarskogo gosudarstva," *VizVrem* 28 (1968): 136–50.

7 Langdon, "Forgotten Assault" (n. 5 above); A. Dancheva-Vasileva, *Bŭlgariia i latinskata imperiia, 1204–1261* (Sofia, 1985), 139–45.

Elena, who was about eleven years old at the time of her marriage, moved to the Anatolian Byzantine court where Theodore's mother, the empress Eirene, arranged for the further upbringing and education of the child bride.⁸

Further factual information on Elena is limited. According to Akropolites, Ivan Asen II soon changed his mind about his alliance with Nicaea. Under the pretext of longing to see his daughter, he forced Elena in 1237 to follow him to Bulgaria. Later in the same year, however, he repented and allowed her to return to her husband.⁹ Elena acquired the title "empress of the Romans" after the proclamation of Theodore Laskaris as co-emperor at an unknown date before 1241.¹⁰ The manuscript heading of the *Moral Pieces* calls her *despoina*, a word normally used in reference only to empresses.¹¹ In fact Akropolites calls her empress (*basilis*) in his account of the marriage in 1235 and *despoina* in his description of events that took place in 1246.¹² The couple is known to have had six children: Eirene (the eldest), Maria, Theodora, Eudokia, another unknown daughter, and John (the future child-emperor John IV Laskaris, blinded around Christmas 1261, following the Byzantine recapture of Constantinople on 25 July of the same year).¹³ Only the date of birth of

8 §34, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 1:52.10–15. Curiously, Akropolites states here that Theodore was "in his eleventh year" at the time of his marriage—the same age as that of Theodore's engagement, which Akropolites reports in a previous chapter (§31, p. 48.20–21). The confusion seems to me to be an inadvertent mistake of Akropolites. Given the date of his birth, Theodore could have been "in his eleventh year" only at the time of his betrothal, not his marriage in 1235.

9 §34, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 1:52.20–53.21.

10 On the question of Theodore II Laskaris's co-emperorship, see most recently P. Zhavoronkov, "Byl li Feodor II Laskar' soimperatorom," in *Vizantiiskie ocherki: Trudy rossiiskikh uchenykh k XXI Mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vizantinistov* (St. Petersburg, 2007), 76–80; Macrides, *George Akropolites* (n. 4 above), 39.

11 This was the case in the middle of the fourteenth century. See Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des Offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (Paris, 1966), 175.28–32, 267.26–18.

12 §34, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 1:52.12; §44, 1:77.3–5.

13 On the six children of Theodore Laskaris, see A. Failler, "Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère," *REB* 38 (1980): 65–77. Eirene married the Bulgarian tsar Constantine Tikh in 1257 and died by 1270. Maria was married to Nikephoros Komnenos Doukas in 1256 and died by 1259.

John IV Laskaris in late 1250 can be deduced from the eyewitness testimony of Akropolites, which is confirmed by the anonymous chronicle of 1354.¹⁴

While 1250 is a *terminus post quem* for the death of Elena, a *terminus ante* should be set at 1253 for the following two reasons. The heading of the *Moral Pieces* refers to the work being composed before the embassy to the empire of Nicaea of Marquis Berthold von Hohenburg, who is attested at the Anatolian Byzantine court in the autumn 1253 and who most probably stayed until early 1254.¹⁵ In addition,

See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 338–339. Theodora was married in 1261 to Mathieu de Vélignot, count of Velingosti and Damala. After the latter passed away by 1263 she was due to marry the *parakoimomenos* Makrenos, captured in the Peloponnesus, which gave rise to suspicions of *lèse majesté* against Michael VIII Palaiologos, and the marriage never took place. Eudokia was married in 1261 to Pierre Guillaume de Vintimille, the master of the castle of Tende in southern France, and followed her husband to the West. Her children from this marriage adopted the surname “Lascaris de Vintimille.” After being widowed, she married Roger de Pallars. An unnamed daughter of Theodore Laskaris married in 1261 Jacob Svetoslav, Despot of Vidin and pretender to the Bulgarian crown. See George Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, ed. A. Failler, trans. V. Laurent (Paris, 1984), 2:243.

14 Failler, “Chronologie,” 73 n. 3, examines also conflicting evidence from other sources.

15 Berthold of Hohenburg departed for Asia Minor in 1253. See M. Döberl, “Berthold von Vohburg-Hohenburg, der letzte Vorkämpfer der deutschen Herrschaft im Königreiche Sicilien: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der letzten Staufer,” *DZGw* 14 (1894): 225–26, with references to the western sources. That Berthold was at the Anatolian Byzantine court in the autumn of 1253 emerges from Theodore Laskaris’s reference to the season in a letter to the metropolitan of Sardis Andronikos, who was at the time on an embassy to the papacy. See ep. 125.1, ed. N. Festa, *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae CCXVII* (Florence, 1898), 174. On his embassy, see also F. Tinnefeld, “Das Niveau der abendländischen Wissenschaft aus der Sicht gebildeter Byzantiner im 13. und 14. Jh.,” *ByzF* 6 (1979): 254–60. Berthold’s mission was highly sensitive: the return to Italy of political refugees from the Lancia family, close relatives of John III Vatatzes’ second wife Constance of Hohenstaufen, who fled earlier in 1253 en masse to Asia Minor on account of being suspected of disloyalty vis-à-vis King Conrad (1250–1254) after Manfred II Lancia, marquis of Busca, had allied himself with the Guelf party in Milan and had been elected on 1 January 1253 its podestà. Although direct information is lacking, Berthold von Hohenburg probably stayed in Anatolia until the winter of 1254, waiting for the return of John III Vatatzes from his more than one-year-long campaign in the Balkans. The manuscript titles of all works by Theodore Laskaris in the Milan and Paris manuscripts, where the *Moral Pieces* are transmitted, specify the emperor John III Vatatzes as the one who officially received Berthold von Hohenburg’s embassy. Berthold of Hohenburg is

Theodore’s letter to the patriarch Manuel II (1243–54) consoling him for the death of his only son mentions that in the previous year the patriarch had comforted Theodore during a similar period of mourning, which seems to be the passing of Theodore’s much-lamented wife. As 1254 is the latest possible date for this letter, it follows that the patriarch would have comforted Theodore in or before 1253.¹⁶

Four letters by Theodore Laskaris (*epistulae* 57–60) addressed to his teacher and friend, the future historian George Akropolites, were composed during the period of Theodore’s mourning for Elena and contain valuable chronological clues. The letters form a distinct thematic cluster and are copied consecutively in the fourteenth-century Cod. Laurentianus plut. 59, 35 (the main codex of Theodore Laskaris’s letters), creating the impression that they are arranged in the order of their composition. The first letter (no. 57) is the most allusive. It speaks of a divine retribution having befallen the author, who declares his wish to depart from life in a way similar to the dramatic closure of the *Moral Pieces*. In the following letter (no. 58) Theodore vents his sorrow which, we learn, is deepened by the absence of his father, the emperor John III Vatatzes, and of the recipient, George Akropolites. The author speaks of a grievous misfortune that he contrasts with the proverbial saying “things last year are always better,” thus hinting that the misfortune happened in the previous year. The misfortune is the passing of Elena, to whom Theodore Laskaris alludes by saying, “My resplendent light has set in a dark abode, leaving me no hope of its rising.”¹⁷ He asks rhetorically: “Where is the flower of my youth? Where is the beehive of the words and wishes of my heart? Everything has disappeared, everything has gone leaving me behind truly alone.”¹⁸

attested back in Italy in the spring of 1254 and was certainly there by 21 May, when Conrad died near Lavello, appointing shortly before his passing Berthold as the governor (*baiulus regni*) of the kingdom of Sicily in the name of his two-year old son Conradin. See Döberl, “Berthold von Vohburg-Hohenburg,” 228; J. F. Böhmer and J. Ficker, *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 5, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Philipp, Otto IV, Friedrich II, Heinrich (VII), Conrad IV, Heinrich Raspe, Wilhelm und Richard, 1198–1272* (Innsbruck, 1881–82), 4631 and 4632a.

16 Ep. 94.57–58, ed. Festa, 127.

17 Ep. 58.14–15, ed. Festa, 87.

18 Ep. 58.18–19, ed. Festa, 87.

According to letter 59, Akropolites has already comforted in writing Theodore, whose “soul has been shaken and shattered by suffering.” Unfortunately, no letter by Akropolites to Theodore Laskaris survives. Letter 59 reveals that Akropolites and John III Vatatzes were still away and ends by letting it be known that by the command of his father-emperor, Theodore Laskaris has left Nymphaion, changed his dress (evidently his mourning clothes), and resumed eating meat. It may therefore be concluded that Theodore mourned his wife in the palace in Nymphaion. Elena was probably buried not far from Nymphaion, in the newly founded imperial monastic complex at Sosandra on Mt. Sipyron, which would become the resting place of her father-in-law John III Vatatzes and Theodore II Laskaris himself.¹⁹ In the same letter Theodore Laskaris mentions that he was already on the move. He refers to his departure from the “three-gated” Thebe (Thebe-under-Plakos in the *Iliad*, by which Theodore designates anachronistically the contemporary Atramyttion) for the “celebrated Troy” (the remains of Alexandria Troas were still visible in the Middle Ages) and his imminent expectation of seeing the Hellespont, which he says separated him from Akropolites.²⁰ Therefore, John III Vatatzes and Akropolites were still in the European provinces of the Nicaean empire. Notably, no prospect of Theodore meeting Akropolites is mentioned. The letter is replete with declarations of sorrow, and the impression is created that only the command of the father-emperor made Theodore leave the imperial residence in Nymphaion. Finally, the brief letter 60 speaks of Theodore’s inconsolable sorrow and thoughts of death.

One lengthy Balkan sojourn of John III Vatatzes and Akropolites known in the period 1250–1253 is the Nicaean military expedition against Epiros between

the second half of 1252 and the late autumn of 1253.²¹ This, I believe, must be the period of composition of these letters. For if Akropolites had participated in another extended campaign of John III Vatatzes in the Balkans in 1251 and the first half of 1252, it is reasonable to assume that the historian would have mentioned it in the *History*. Instead he does not cover any events in this period. Furthermore, the *History* of Akropolites does not refer to Theodore Laskaris taking part in the expedition of 1252–1253/54, which corresponds to the situation described in the above letters. Theodore Laskaris appears to have been expected to manage affairs in Anatolia as they happened, just as he is known to have done at a much younger age during the campaign of John Vatatzes in the Balkans in 1241;²² this would explain the order he received from Vatatzes to end his mourning and leave Nymphaion.

The key to establishing a narrower date for Elena’s passing is the proverbial saying in letter 58, “things last year are always better,” which Theodore Laskaris contrasts with the sorrow caused by his wife’s passing. Since the Byzantine year began on 1 September, the death of Elena could have occurred either before 1 September 1252 or before 1 September 1253, to fit the absence of Akropolites and Vatatzes in the Balkans at the time. The latter terminus is implausible, however. Had Theodore written letter 58 after 1 September 1253, then Akropolites’ consolatory letter and letters 59 and 60 of Theodore Laskaris would have to be dated within a span of two months at most. Furthermore, letters 58, 59, and 60 make no mention of Theodore’s expectation of meeting his correspondent, which contrasts to other letters to Akropolites, where the author rejoices at the imminent arrival of his friend after a period of separation.²³ Therefore, by means of elimination, 1 September

19 H. Ahrweiler, “L’histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317),” *TM* 1 (1965): 89–91, 94–96; Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 338.

20 Herodotus, *History* 7.42, locates Thebe-under-Plakos on the plain of Atramyttion. The late Byzantine author John Pediasimos identifies ancient Thebe-under-Plakos and contemporary Atramyttion. See his scholia on Hesiod in *Poetae minores graeci*, vol. 2, ed. T. Gaisford (Leipzig, 1823), 616.14–15. Theodore Laskaris never mentions Atramyttion by its contemporary name. In a letter written during the Bulgarian campaign of 1255, Theodore reminds his friend George Mouzalon, a native of Atramyttion, of “Thebe-under-Plakos.” See *ep.* 202.16–17, ed. Festa, 248.

21 The campaign can be solidly dated to this period on the basis of the eyewitness account of George Akropolites. See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 251. John Vatatzes spent the winter of 1252–53 in the Balkans; on his way back to Asia Minor in the autumn of 1253 he passed through Philippi, where the trial of Michael Palaiologos took place. He then seems to have wintered in Nymphaion, for the *Synopsis Chronike* attributed to Theodore Skoutariotes adds that in February 1254 Vatatzes came to Nicaea from “the East.” See K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 7 (Venice, 1894), 504.14–16.

22 §40, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 1:67.3–10, with reference to the expedition of John III Vatatzes in 1241 against Thessalonike.

23 *Epp.* 83–85, ed. Festa, 110–12.

1252 emerges as *terminus ante quem* for the death of Elena. Letter 58 was composed not too long after the beginning of the Byzantine year in 1252, for we find in this letter that John III Vatatzes and Akropolites are already in the Balkans while Theodore is in mourning. The spring or summer of 1252 is thus the most plausible time for the passing of Elena. She was then twenty-eight years old and her husband thirty. The composition of the *Moral Pieces* can, therefore, be dated to 1252.

While the *Moral Pieces* add no new factual information about Elena's life, the work helps to paint a fuller picture of this imperial marriage by the husband's own literary hand. Looking back at his marriage, Theodore describes it as "a bond of incomparable love" suddenly severed by death. He calls Elena his "soul mate," the "spring of my soul," and "the salvation of my life and soul," vowing to descend into the land of Hades to join her. In his letters Theodore Laskaris also movingly calls Elena "my resplendent light," "the flower of my youth," and "the beehive of the words and wishes of my heart."²⁴ This emotive language concurs with Akropolites' account in his *History*, written long after the fact, of how on being forcefully led back to Bulgaria in 1237 Elena wept and bewailed the separation from her husband.²⁵ Theodore clearly represented his marriage to Elena as a deeply affectionate one. United in their early teens by political expediency, Theodore and Elena not only grew up together and acquired a large family, but also appear to have nurtured a genuine loving relationship.

Themes and Style

The *Moral Pieces* consist of twelve self-contained parts, each an essay on the subject of the transience of human existence, explicitly mentioned in the extended title: *Moral Pieces Describing the Inconstancy of Life* (ἐπιτομαὶ ἡθικαὶ τὸ τοῦ βίου ἄστατον διαγράφουσαι). My translation of ἐπιτομαὶ ἡθικαὶ as *Moral Pieces* is based on a rare meaning of the word ἐπιτομή as a "cutting" rather than its more common sense of an "abridgment"

or "epitome."²⁶ It is clear that the *Moral Pieces* do not represent an epitome in the sense of the succinct version of a philosophical treatise or the doctrines of a philosophical school, nor are they a teaching manual on philosophy, such as the *Introductory Epitome* (Εἰσαγωγικὴ ἐπιτομή) of Nikephoros Blemmydes, consisting of an epitome of logic and an epitome of physics.²⁷ The twelve essays are called τμήματα ("slices," "sections") by their manuscript headings, an idiosyncratic word for the successive parts of a unitary treatise, which would normally be referred to as κεφάλαια ("chapters"). The designation of the essays as τμήματα can be seen as an etymological word play with the title ἐπιτομαί.

The twelve essays broach the subject of the transience of human existence from different angles and through varied rhetorical strategies and presentations of the self. The first essay discusses the oscillation of the human soul between virtue and vice, and God's impending judgment, while the second essay deals with the vanity of life and flawed human nature. In the third and fourth essays we hear for the first time the "I" voice of the author, "sailing across the sea of life," "journeying on the heights of happiness," and "dwelling on the peaks of grief." In the fifth and the sixth essays, the author poses as a detached observer marveling at the opinions of the crowd and the fickleness of fortune in the light of his own suffering. The seventh essay is written in a markedly prescriptive and advisory mode. The eighth introduces Aristotelian philosophical vocabulary that recurs in the tenth and, most prominently, eleventh essays. These ideas derive from Aristotle's *Categories*, *Physics*, and *On Generation and Passing Away*. The ninth essay adds the nuance of the author marveling at the "transformation of thoughts." The remarkable twelfth essay confesses dramatically the author's love for his departed wife.

²⁴ Ep. 58.14–18, ed. Festa, 87.

²⁵ §34, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 53.12–21. See also Blemmydes' testimony referred to in n. 28 of the translation.

²⁶ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. H. S. Jones (Oxford, 1940), s.v. ἐπιτομή, with references to Aeschines, *In Ctesiphontem*, and Philo, *Belopoeica*.

²⁷ On the title *Introductory Epitome*, see W. Lackner, "Zum Lehrbuch der Physik des Nikephoros Blemmydes," *ByzF* 4 (1972): 161; W. Lackner, "Die erste Auflage des Physiklehrbuches des Nikephoros Blemmydes," in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, ed. F. Paschke (Berlin, 1981), 351 and n. 1. The *Moral Pieces* certainly do not resemble an epitome of Aristotle's ethical treatises or a work like the *Epitomes of Stoic Ethics* by the Alexandrian Stoic Areios Didymos (1st c. BC–1st c. AD).

The thematic variations of the *Moral Pieces* raise interesting and challenging questions regarding generic typology. Initial remarks can be offered here that I hope can prepare the way for fuller discussion and the proper positioning of the work in the history of thirteenth-century Byzantine literature. In length (300 to 500 words), the essays of the *Moral Pieces* resemble six unpublished essays of Theodore Laskaris that are preserved in Cod. Vindobonensis phil. gr. 321 and address diverse subjects such as moral and natural philosophy. They include a satirical piece on the metropolitan of Ephesos and a work *To Himself* (literally “regarding matters concerning himself”).²⁸ The manuscript titles of four of these six essays categorize them as either a “sentence” (γνώμη) or a “thesis” (θέσις), which are also the designations of preparatory school exercises (*progymnasmata*). Yet the similarity with school practice is slight. For neither the essays of the *Moral Pieces* nor the musings preserved in the Vindobonensis are the exercises of Hermogenes’ and Aphthonios’s *Progymnasmata*, according to which a “sentence” is a composition discussing a famous maxim regarding a course of conduct or action and a “thesis” is a composition on a general proposition.²⁹ While several of the essays of the *Moral Pieces* and of the Vindobonensis end prescriptively, they do not discuss old maxims, they lack parainetic titles, and most are self-descriptive and self-referential. What is significant to observe then is Theodore Laskaris’s fondness for brief essayistic compositions which, in the case of the *Moral Pieces*, he wove together into a single work. Interestingly, the twelve-part structure of the *Moral Pieces* is similar to

Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations*, a famous work of Stoic philosophy written by a Roman emperor. The brief, epigrammatic maxims at the end of the second essay of the *Moral Pieces* embody the same spirit as the ending of the second book of the *Meditations*.³⁰ Yet there are notable differences: the *Meditations* are much longer; no borrowed phrases can be identified; the manuscript transmission of the *Meditations* is not connected to the thirteenth century.³¹ Furthermore and perhaps most importantly, in contrast to the *Meditations*, the *Moral Pieces* convey characteristically Christian ideas of remorse and compunction.

The *Moral Pieces* find close thematic parallels in soul-searching religious works of compunction (*katanyxis*)—works prominently represented by the *katanyctic* hymns of Romanos Melodos and the *Great Canon* of Andrew of Crete.³² Theodore Laskaris’s lifetime saw a rise of interest in the *Great Canon*, sung annually during Lent: the profuse commentaries by Akakios Sabaites have been dated to the period 1219–1261.³³ Themes shared by the *Moral Pieces* and *katanyctic* works are the feeling of contrition for past sins, the questions addressed to one’s inner self, and the thoughts of approaching death and the brevity of life. Such pangs of remorse are found also in other works by Theodore Laskaris, notably in some of his letters and in his essay *To Himself* addressing “his wretched flesh.”

The spirituality of the *Moral Pieces* is uniquely articulated through the vocabulary of Aristotle’s natural philosophy: hence the ubiquitous ideas of corruption, generation, motion, growth, and diminution. Aristotle’s influence is not surprising: Theodore is

28 The essays in Vindob. phil. gr. 321 are entitled τοῦ αὐτοῦ γνώμη μετὰ τὴν <τῆς> βασιλείας ἐντελέχειαν (f. 66r), τοῦ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῶν καθ’ αὐτόν (66r–66v), τοῦ αὐτοῦ λήμμα (ff. 66v–67r), τοῦ αὐτοῦ θέσις (f. 67r), τοῦ αὐτοῦ θέσις (ff. 67r–v), τοῦ αὐτοῦ γνώμη (67v–68r).

29 *Hermogenis Opera*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig 1913), 8–11, 24–26 (Hermogenes’ description of γνώμη and θέσις); *Aphthonii Progymnasmata*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig, 1926), 7–10, 41–46 (Aphthonios’s description of γνώμη and θέσις). See, for example, George Pachymeres’ composition on the sentence by Demosthenes “Money is needed, and none of the necessities can be accomplished without it,” and on the thesis “Whether one should sail,” in C. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1832), 555–57, 583–86. The subjects of Pachymeres’ compositions had been treated already by Libanios in late antiquity. On the meaning of γνώμη in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and the adjective γνωμικός, see B. Bydén in *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy: Semeioseis gnomikai* 1–26 & 71, ed. and trans. K. Hult, with a contribution by B. Bydén (Göteborg, 2002), 255–58.

30 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 2.17.

31 A. S. L. Farquharson, *The Meditations of Marcus Antoninus* (Oxford, 1944), XVI–XVIII, XXVIII–XXXII.

32 For a survey of the themes of *katanyctic* hymnography, see A. Giannouli, “Die Tränen der Zerknirschung: Zur *katanyctic* Kirchendichtung als Heilmittel,” in “*Doux remède*: Poésie et poétique à Byzance,” ed. P. Odorico, P. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (Paris, 2009), 141–55. In addition to hymnography, *katanyctic* themes are featured in many of the poems *De se ipso* of Gregory of Nazianzos and in the so-called *katanyctic* alphabets. On the latter, see D. N. Anastasijewić, *Die paränetischen Alphabete in der griechischen Literatur* (Munich, 1905); idem, “Alphabete. I. Fünf Klagelieder ‘An die eigene Seele’ zwecks ihrer Buße (Bußlieder),” *BZ* 16 (1907): 479–501.

33 A. Giannouli, *Die beiden byzantinischen Kommentare zum Großen Kanon des Andreas von Kreta* (Vienna, 2007), 76–86 (on the date of the commentary).

known to have read and glossed a part of Aristotle's *Physics* in Cod. Ambrosianus gr. M 46 sup.;³⁴ Aristotle's natural philosophy is a key component of the *Epitome of Physics* by Nikephoros Blemmydes, Theodore's teacher;³⁵ and Aristotelian expressions, such as the word "actuality" (ἐντελέχεια), are deeply ingrained in the epistolary and philosophical discourse of Theodore. Two further themes appear somewhat surprisingly in the last, the twelfth essay, where the author confesses his love for his wife and specifies the traumatic and transformative event that made him reassess the meaning of life. A motif from ancient and Byzantine funerary literature found here is the mourner's wish to die. Accordingly, after mentioning his loss, Theodore vows to turn into a corpse and descend into the dark abodes of Hades.³⁶ Both the *Moral Pieces* and a letter dating to the period of Elena's passing cite a phrase from Psalm 118 (119), the *Amomos* that was recited during funeral services in Byzantium and on other occasions.³⁷

The love motif is another theme in this complex and rich work. The image of conjugal bliss and love in the twelfth essay introduces a sensibility possibly derived from the fictional world of the ancient and Byzantine romances. Theodore Laskaris's essay *To Himself* demonstrates that he read love fiction.³⁸ The eighth essay of the *Moral Pieces* makes mention of *eros* (lines 332–33) as a force of human nature, dismissed here

as leading to nothing permanent and truly existent.³⁹ The rare word ἰσοψυχία with which Theodore Laskaris describes his strong bond to Elena in the *Moral Pieces* (line 495) appears also in the twelfth-century romance *Drosilla and Charikles* with reference to the unity of lovers.⁴⁰ It is in the milieu of the Laskarid court during the period 1240–60 that Panagiotis Agapitos has situated the composition of *Livistros and Rodamne*, the longest and most complex of the late Byzantine romances. To the same milieu belongs a series of manuscripts transmitting ancient and Komnenian novels.⁴¹ The closeness of the last essay of the *Moral Pieces* to the ideal of "romantic" love is a theme worth pursuing in future research.

The *Moral Pieces* are written in an impulsive, sometimes dramatic "stream-of-consciousness" style. This characteristic of Theodore Laskaris's writing impressed Byzantine readers. The historian George Pachymeres, born in Nicaea in 1242, remarks that Theodore had "a writing ability by nature rather than education, so that he composed many things in a flowingly abundant manner, if he only got the urge."⁴² The free-flowing syntax of the *Moral Pieces* features numerous *polysyndeta* connected with καί as well as periphrases and re-elaborations of the same points. From the point of view of the edition and the translation, the free-flowing syntax can sometimes obfuscate the otherwise straightforward Greek. In this regard the punctuation

34 G. Prato, "Un autografo di Teodoro II Laskaris imperatore di Nicea?" *JÖB* 30 (1981): 249–58.

35 The final edition of Blemmydes' *Epitome of Physics* prepared in about 1260 was preceded by an earlier version made for teaching, close to the time when Theodore Laskaris was among Blemmydes' students. See Lackner, "Die erste Auflage," 351–64, esp. 362–63.

36 M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974), 189. On the desire to join the dead as a motif in funerary literature, see Gregory of Nazianzos's funeral oration on his brother Kaisarios, in PG 35:785B. See also the funerary oration by the monk Makarios in A. Sideras, ed., *25 unedierte byzantinische Grabreden* (Thessalonike, 1990), 297.

37 See below, n. 50 for the phrase "walking in a broad space" (Psalm 118 [119]:45). On Psalm 118 (119), see D. Toulaitos-Banker, *The Byzantine Amomos Chant of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Thessalonike, 1984), 109–17.

38 Cod. Vindob. gr. 321, fol. 66v: καὶ γαμικαῖς ἐν μυθοπλαστίαις ἀληθείας ἀναπλάττει μοι εἰδῶλα, τὸ φανταστικὸν περιστρέφουσα. The noun modifying περιστρέφουσα is the "flesh" (σάρξ) of the author. In accordance with the katanyctic context, the author bemoans how much love fiction tempted his sinful flesh and excited his fantasy.

39 In ep. 78, to Akropolites (*Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, 105–6), Theodore mentions that he himself was accused of *eros* (an unspecified amorous escapade), dismisses the charge, and promises to punish the man responsible for circulating this rumor, the governor of Thessalonike Theodore Philes. Theodore's angry denial and vengeful attitude suggests that the accusation is not the sin confessed in ep. 24 to Blemmydes (see below, nn. 53–55). The accusation by Philes is most probably the subject of Theodore's letters 36–39 to Blemmydes, where the author complains of being unjustly slandered, declares innocence, and expresses relief at his eventual vindication. See *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, 44–51.

40 Niketas Eugenianos, *De Drosillae et Chariclis amoribus*, 6.484, ed. F. Conca (Amsterdam, 1990), 166.

41 P. Agapitos, *Αφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης: Κριτική έκδοση τῆς διασκευῆς α* (Athens, 2006), 51–53.

42 George Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, I, ed. A. Failler, trans. V. Laurent (Paris, 1984), 59.14–16: οὐ μᾶλλον ἐκ μαθήσεως ἢ φύσεως τὴν περὶ τὸ γράφειν δύναμιν ἔχων, ὡς καὶ πολλὰ ἐπιρρῶδην ἐκτιθέναι, εἰ μόνον ὁρμήσειεν. Pachymeres then adduces the example of the hymns Theodore Laskaris composed off-hand on the feast days of saints. Compositions entitled ὕμνοι διάφοροι and addressed to various saints survive in Cod. Vindobonensis phil. gr. 321, fols. 103r–108r.

of the manuscript often provides important clues. The language is richly metaphorical, and plays with words and on their multiple meanings.⁴³ There are several rare and unique words. A hapax attested only in the works of Theodore Laskaris is the verb κατασταθμίζω (“to measure out,” “to determine”) (line 458).⁴⁴ The verb διασπέρω (“to disperse”) (line 105) is encountered only in the *Moral Pieces* and is unattested in the lexica.⁴⁵ The compound verb ἀρμοτέμνω (line 535) is also unattested elsewhere: it is formed from the noun ἄρμος (“shoulder joint”) and the verb τέμνω (“to cut”). One may consider it a new coinage, especially as the invention of composite words has been shown to be characteristic of Theodore’s style.⁴⁶ The observed stylistic and lexical peculiarities of the *Moral Pieces* ground this work firmly within the context of the literary output of Theodore Laskaris.

Audience and Affinity with Other Works of Theodore Laskaris

The question of the audience of the *Moral Pieces* is impossible to answer with precision. In his letters Theodore Laskaris mentions sharing his literary and philosophical compositions with members of his epistolary circle. He usually does not identify the work his correspondents were expected to read, although he sometimes refers or alludes to its subject matter—and

in one case composes a letter of dedication.⁴⁷ Nowhere is there a direct reference to the circulation of the *Moral Pieces*. What may be plausibly suggested is that the intended readership of the *Moral Pieces* would have consisted of the usual recipients of Theodore’s literary and philosophical works, among whom George Akropolites and George Mouzalon (two of his main correspondents) are mentioned most frequently.

Ideas and vocabulary of the *Moral Pieces* crop up sometimes in Theodore’s letters. However this circumstance, noteworthy in itself, does not necessarily prove that the addressee of the letter had read the *Moral Pieces*. A case in point is a letter of Theodore to the metropolitan of Sardis Andronikos, which opens with a summary of some of the arguments of the *Moral Pieces*: “Many people,” the letter states, “often admire the nonexistent” (a subject of the sixth essay of the *Moral Pieces*); “People who admire the nonexistent come to admire the existent” (this is the moral of the seventh, eighth, and ninth essays of the *Moral Pieces*); “However, people admiring the existent do not admire the nonexistent, because they admire the existent” (these individuals are those of “noble soul” in the ninth essay and “the steady and the good” in the tenth essay). The parallel with the *Moral Pieces* is evident, even though the comments in the letter are not presented as a summary of any literary work.⁴⁸

43 For a play on the meaning of the adjective φοβερός, see lines 429–30 and n. 25. The author plays, for example, throughout the essays with the multiple connotations of the noun φθορά (“corruption,” “decay,” “passing away,” “death”) and in essay nine with the multiple meanings of στάσις (“state,” “stability,” but also “discord”).

44 N. Festa, “Κοσμική Δήλωση,” *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 12 (1899): 43.27; Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia, 35.259 (encomium on John III Vatatzes), 102.150 (encomium on George Akropolites). See E. Trapp et al., *Lexikon der byzantinischen Gräzität*, fasc. 4 (Vienna, 2001), s.v. κατασταθμίζω.

45 The verb σπέρω (hence διασπέρω) is attested in homiletic writing. See the homilies of St. Neophytos the Recluse in *Ἔκλογον Νεοφύτου τοῦ Ἐκκλησίου συγγράμματα*, vol. 1, ed. N. Zacharopoulos et al. (Paphos, 1996), 119.25, 204.10. The form σπέρνω is vernacular. See Agapitos, *Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης*, 300, line 1169.

46 On Theodore Laskaris’s fondness for inventing new words, see E. Trapp, “The Role of Vocabulary in Byzantine Rhetoric as a Stylistic Device,” in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, ed. E. Jeffreys, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies 11 (Oxford, 2003), 143–44.

47 *Ep.* 51.83–93, ed. Festa, 75 (the letter to George Akropolites accompanies a work by Theodore, which is probably his encomium on Nicaea called “Nicaea celebrated by me”); *epp.* 66 and 68, at 94–95, 96 (mathematical and philosophical works sent to Akropolites); *ep.* 141.50–56, at 200 (accompanies an oration on the Virgin sent to the metropolitan of Kyzikos Kleidas), *ep.* 172, at 225 (letter to George Mouzalon announcing a composition that Mouzalon was expected to read upon his return), *ep.* 187, at 236 (letter of dedication of the *Representation of the World, or Life* to George Mouzalon), *ep.* 209.30–38, at 261 (a composition is sent to George Mouzalon). It is possible that *ep.* 29, to Nikephoros Blemmydes (at 38–39) and *ep.* 89 (at 116) to George Akropolites also refer to the circulation of Theodore Laskaris’s writings.

48 *Ep.* 124, ed. Festa, 173–74. For a rather periphrastic translation of this letter, see A. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea: The Story of an Empire in Exile* (London, 1912), 306–7, who thought that the letter probably responded to a compliment paid by Andronikos to Theodore as a writer. The sense of the letter, however, is unclear; the expression “γραφῆς ταύτης” should be interpreted as referring to the letter of Theodore to Andronikos rather than Theodore’s writings. Elsewhere in his correspondence Theodore uses the word γραφή to mean a letter. See *ep.* 102.10, ed. Festa, 139; *ep.* 112.22, at 157; *ep.* 133.21,

Several of Theodore's letters to Akropolites and Blemmydes contain imagery and phrases similar to some in the *Moral Pieces*. In letters to Akropolites composed at the time of his mourning for Elena (*epistulae* 57–60), Theodore says he was “blinded in his intellect”;⁴⁹ describes himself as “a guileless lamb” and “walking in a broad space” (Ps. 118 [119]:45) during his earlier carefree existence;⁵⁰ and speaks of having been deprived of his soul and salvation.⁵¹ The dark thoughts of death in letters 57 and 60 resemble the dramatic ending of the *Moral Pieces*, and letter 57 makes the familiar confession of a deserved punishment for a life not led according to virtue. Especially close to the *Moral Pieces* is letter 23 addressed to his teacher and spiritual father Nikephoros Blemmydes, giving vent to Theodore's towering grief and presenting his correspondent as his only solace.⁵² This letter together with those to Akropolites reveals the unsettled state of Theodore's mind at the time of Elena's death.

The *Moral Pieces* have particular affinity with letter 24 to Blemmydes. Confessing an unspecified sin,

at 188; *ep.* 178.4, at 229; *ep.* 179.31, at 230; *ep.* 182.2, at 233; *ep.* 195.16–17, at 241.

49 *Ep.* 57.9, ed. Festa, 85: ἐπὶ τρίβους συνεκτείνομεν κακίας τυφλούμενος τῷ νοῦ; *Moral Pieces*, lines 180–81: οὕτω τυφλώττομαι ὡς ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως κἀγὼ τῷ νοῦ.

50 Ed. Festa, letter 57.10–11, p. 85: ὡς ἄρνιον ἄκακον ἐπορευόμεν ἐν πλατυσμῷ [Ps. 118.45]; *Moral Pieces*, lines 484–85: (ἄρνα μιμούμενος τὸν ἀπόνηρον) and line 149 (Πορευόμενος ἐπορευόμεν ἐν πλατυσμῷ).

51 *Ep.* 59.37–38, ed. Festa, 89: διότι τῷ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς χωρισμῷ ἐχωρίσθην καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας μου; *Moral Pieces*, lines 550–53: τῆς ζωῆς μου ἐστέρημαι, τῆς ψυχικῆς τε πνοῆς καρδιακῆς τέ μου συστάσεως καὶ τῆς τῆς ζωῆς μου σωτηρίας, ψυχικῆς ὁμοῦ καὶ σωματικῆς.

52 As in the *Moral Pieces*, Theodore speaks of sailing on the ship of life that is disturbed by contrary winds without any hope of salvation (the letter goes on to present Blemmydes as his only safe harbor), of experiencing a disaster formerly unknown to him, of being eaten up by sorrow, of thoughts of death and of beasts ready to tear him to pieces (although the letter refers collectively to the beasts as τὰ τοῦ δρυμῶνος θήρια [line 106] rather than the worm, dragon, hydra, viper, and basilisk of the twelfth essay). Some examples of shared vocabulary: *ep.* 23.1, ed. Festa, 28 and *Moral Pieces*, line 393: φωτὸς στέρησις; *ep.* 23.11, ed. Festa, 28 and *Moral Pieces*, line 177: the use of the noun παρακοή with regard to the fall of the soul and human nature from its original state; *ep.* 23.54, ed. Festa, 30 and *Moral Pieces*, line 141: the description of human nature with the adjective εὐόλισθος; compare the phrase ὁ τῇ λύπῃ τρωθεὶς καὶ τὰ ἔγκατα διόλου διαλυθεὶς in *ep.* 23.73–74, ed. Festa, 30, with ἀσπίς πόνου τιτρώσκει τὰ ἔγκατα in *Moral Pieces*, lines 508–9; the use of the verb ἀναρρωννύω in *ep.* 23.34, ed. Festa, 31 and *Moral Pieces*, lines 12 and 31; the use of the verb ἐλλίμενίζω in *ep.* 23.95–96, ed. Festa, 31 and *Moral Pieces*, line 62.

the letter begins with the words: “Holy father, this current Monday I neglected my departed soul by disregarding it” (the phrase plays on the different meanings of the verb παρέρχομαι).⁵³ Theodore says that he should have “dashed nimbly in the soul toward my soul above soul.”⁵⁴ The allusion is to the departed Elena, whom Theodore calls in the *Moral Pieces* his “soul mate” and “my soul's spirit,” and whom the letter presents metaphorically as his own soul. Theodore contrasts his sinfulness to what should have happened to him, namely, the dissolution of his legs, joints, and heart, which is described in a naturalistic manner in the twelfth essay of his *Moral Pieces*. The author further refers to “a tomb and dust” bearing witness to his misconduct and states that he should have been inside the tomb, declaring dramatically, “I exist bereft of lives that supported my own life and I journey being really dead.”⁵⁵ One of these lives would have been Elena's, although the plural here is noteworthy.

The self-flagellating posture of Theodore Laskaris in the *Moral Pieces* and the letters is the starting point for his *Apology to Some of His Friends Pressing Him to Find a Bride*.⁵⁶ The *Apology* postdates Elena's death and shows that remarriage was the expected course of action of the widowed emperor. Here Theodore rejects any association with women. The *Apology* opens with the familiar confession of the author's sinfulness and proceeds to describe Theodore Laskaris's conscious choice not to marry a woman but be wed to Lady Philosophy. He refers to the “offspring” that philosophy has already borne him (that is, his writings) and vows to flee from the perishable materiality of the world and lead a life of the intellect. The idea of withdrawal from the materiality of the world in the *Apology* is also found in the *Moral Pieces*. Notably, however, what is described as virtue in the *Moral Pieces* has become a life of philosophy in the *Apology*—a theme never explicitly broached in the *Moral Pieces*.

The *Moral Pieces* present ideas and observations of Theodore Laskaris found also in his philosophical

53 *Ep.* 24.1–2, ed. Festa, 32: πάτερ ἄγιε, τῇ παρούσῃ δευτέρᾳ τὴν ἐμὴν παρελθοῦσαν ψυχὴν παρέλειψα παρελθόν.

54 *Ep.* 24.8–9, ed. Festa, 33: τῇ ψυχῇ κούφως πρὸς τὴν ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς ψυχὴν μου δραμών.

55 *Ep.* 24.23–24, ed. Festa, 33.

56 *Theodoros Ducas Laskaris, Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. L. Tartaglia (Munich, 2000), 110–18.

treatises. In the fourth essay of the *Moral Pieces* he states that his material possessions belonged to him by convention (θέσει), but were removed from him by nature (φύσει). The juxtaposition of nature versus convention as two contrary principles of association is the subject of his philosophical treatise *On the Natural Communion*, especially its fifth discourse.⁵⁷ The *Moral Pieces* foreshadow in a notable way Theodore Laskaris's treatise *Representation of the World, or Life* (Κοσμική στήλη ἢ βίος), the third book of his *Explanation of the World*. Here the author makes his observations on life in all its variety as the basis for a wide-ranging commentary on philosophy, justice, and politics addressed to his protégé George Mouzalon—"an account which contains everything," in Theodore Laskaris's words. One of his main observations concerns the inconstancy of human affairs and the fickleness of fortune. Written in the first person singular, the treatise follows the confession-like discourse of some of the essays in the *Moral Pieces* and develops further its ideas and pessimistic premises, which suggests that it postdates the *Moral Pieces*.⁵⁸ The consistent interest of *Moral Pieces* in the concept of "the existent" (τὸ ὄν, τὰ ὄντα) foreshadows the theological treatises Theodore composed after he became sole emperor, in November 1254, in which he would explore the theological implications of the notion.⁵⁹ It is perhaps relevant to note that while Theodore Laskaris was writing the *Moral Pieces*, Nikephoros Blemmydes was the abbot of the monastery of Christ-Who-Is (Χριστὸς ὁ ὢν) founded by him at Emathia near Ephesos.⁶⁰

57 PG 140:1259–1396, especially 1339–62 (the fifth discourse).

58 M. Andreeva, "Polemika Theodora II. Laskaria s Nikiforom Vlemmidom," *Mémoires de la Société Royale des Sciences de Bohême, Classe des lettres, année 1929* (Prague, 1930): 1–36, has argued on the basis of indirect evidence that the *Representation of the World, or Life* postdates the accession of Theodore Laskaris as a sole emperor in November 1254. On the other hand, a manuscript note in Cod. Laur. gr., Conventi Soppressi 627, 5v, attributes the section of Theodore Laskaris's letters to George Mouzalon containing the dedicatory letter of the treatise to the period before his accession. See ep. 187, ed. Festa, 236 and 239, apparatus, for the note after letter 192.

59 The first discourse discusses "the existent" (τὸ ὄν) and the second discourse proves that the existent is one. See Ch. Krikonis, *Θεοδώρου Β' Λασκάρεως περί χριστιανικῆς θεολογίας λόγοι* (Thessalonike, 1988), 85–94.

60 *Moral Pieces*, lines 183–85, 251–53, 293–96, 314–31. J. Munitiz, *Nikephoros Blemmydes: A Partial Account* (Leuven, 1988), 24, has reckoned that Nikephoros Blemmydes moved to the monastery of Christ-Who-Is in around 1249, that is, before the composition of

The Manuscripts

A Ambrosianus gr. C 308 inf. (917), parchment, 13th century, 320 × 250 mm, 99 fols.⁶¹

P Paris, BnF, Cod. gr. 1193, parchment, 14th century, 261–63 × 182–90 mm, 137 fols.⁶²

A is by far the more important textual witness. Its text is copied in two columns per page. The lines per column vary between twenty and twenty-five on account of the different size of the letters throughout the manuscript. The first quire (fols. 2–9, a quaternion) stands out because of the smaller letters. The ink is initially black and becomes brown by the beginning of the third quire (fols. 18–25, also a quaternion). The text features a number of corrections that are worth future study; some pertinent observations are offered here. In the case of the *Moral Pieces* (copied on folios 78r–94r), the corrections are made mostly with black ink and a thinner pen. The work of this corrector is identifiable elsewhere in the manuscript. The corrections are indicated as A^{pc} (pc = *post correctionem*) in the *apparatus criticus*. The text prior to corrections (in cases where I have been able to identify it) is marked as A^{ac} (ac = *ante correctionem*). The script itself is an example of the so-called "blob style" (*Fettaugenstil*) characteristic of manuscripts copied in the second half of the thirteenth and the early fourteenth century.⁶³ There are close similarities with one of the main scribes of Barocchi 131 (ca. 1260–1280), with the hand of Theodora Raoulaina, Emperor Michael VIII's niece and remarried widow of George Mouzalon,

the *Moral Pieces*. On the name on the monastery, see *ibid.*, 116, n. 73. See also J. Munitiz, "Typikon of Nikephoros Blemmydes for the Monastery of the Lord Christ-Who-Is at Emathia near Ephesos," in *BMFD* 3:1196.

61 E. Martini and D. Bassi, *Catalogus Codicum Graecorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae*, vol. 2 (Milan, 1905), 1206–7. For a fuller codicological description, see M. Paléologou, "Deux traités inédits de Théodore II Ducas Lascaris," *Byzantina* 27 (2007): 60–63. Before entering the collection of the Ambrosiana Library the manuscript belonged to Bartolomeo Calco (1434–1508), first secretary to the duchy of Milan, bibliophile, and philanthropist.

62 H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1886), 269. See also Paléologou, "Deux traités inédits," 64–66.

63 H. Hunger, "Die sogennante Fettaugen-Mode in griechischen Handschriften des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts," *ByzF* 4 (1972): 105–13.

in Cod. Vat. gr. 1899 (copied between 1261 and 1282), and with the hand of Cod. Vat. gr. 191 (copied around 1291).⁶⁴ These close parallels suggest that **A** was produced in the second half of the thirteenth century. The headings are executed with an archaizing minuscule imitating twelfth-century *Perlschrift*. In 1903 August Heisenberg proposed that the scribe who copied **A** also copied BnF, Suppl. gr. 472 (13th c.), the earliest codex of the “main” collection of ten rhetorical works of Theodore Laskaris edited in a Teubner volume by Luigi Tartaglia in 2000. In Heisenberg’s view, the two codices represented a two-volume edition.⁶⁵ In 1965 Charles Astruc rightly pointed out that the different size of the manuscripts and the circumstance that the text in **A** is arranged in two columns, while in Suppl. gr. 472 it is not, diminishes the possibility that the manuscripts were intended as a set.⁶⁶ A comparison between the different scribal hands in **A** (Figs. 1 and 2) and in Suppl. gr. 472 (Fig. 4) can put safely to rest Heisenberg’s hypothesis about a two-volume edition witnessed by these two manuscripts.⁶⁷

The text in **P**, copied by a single scribe, is laid out in one column per folio page. The script has the characteristics of the writing of the so-called Hodegon style flourishing in the second half of the fourteenth century (Fig. 3).⁶⁸

64 N. Wilson, *Mediaeval Greek Bookhands* (Cambridge, MA, 1973), 1:29, 2: plate 59 (Barocci 131, fol. 107r): scribe **A** as identified in N. Wilson, “A Byzantine Miscellany: Ms. Barocci 131 Described,” *JÖB* 27 (1978): 177; A. Turyn, *Codices Graeci Vaticani saeculis XIII e XIV scripti annorumque notis instructi* (Vatican City, 1964), plates 36 (Vat. gr. 1899), 61, 64 (Vat. gr. 191). See also the codex of Simplicius’s commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics* copied by Theodora Raoulaina (Moscow, State Historical Museum, 3649), in B. Fonkich, “Zametki o grecheskikh rukopisiakh sovetskikh khranilishch,” *VizVrem* 36 (1974): 134–35 and Plate 1.

65 *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 2:XVII, n. 2.

66 C. Astruc, “La tradition manuscrite des oeuvres oratoires profanes de Théodore II Lascaris,” *TM* 1 (1965): 400–401.

67 Even though the handwriting is similar, the scribe who executed BnF, Suppl. gr. 472 was different from that of BnF, Suppl. gr. 460, a luxury thirteenth-century codex, which is a prime witness to Theodore Laskaris’s philosophical treatise *On the Natural Communion*. See M. Rashed, “Sur les deux témoins des oeuvres profanes de Théodore II Lascaris et leur commanditaire (Parisinus Suppl. gr. 472, Parisinus Suppl. Gr 460),” *Scriptorium* 54 (2000): 297–302.

68 L. Politis, “Eine Schreiberschule im Kloster τῶν Ὁδηγῶν,” *BZ* 51 (1958): 17–36, 261–87, esp. 26–33, fig. 7 (Athos, Lavra A 103), 8

A and **P** share important common features: the nearly identical *lemmata* (headings) before individual orations; the table of contents (*pinax*) at the beginning; and the identical sequence in which the nine orations contained in each codex are copied. The heading of the first oration (*On the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*) mentions the title for the entire collection of nine orations as the *Sacred Orations*: “Sacred orations by Theodore Laskaris, the son of the most exalted emperor of the Romans, *kyr* John Doukas, before the embassy of the marquis Berthold von Hohenburg to the same exalted emperor” (Λόγοι ἱεροὶ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Λάσκαρι τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων κυροῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δούκα πρὸ τῆς τοῦ μαρκίωνος Βελτόρδου Δεμοεμβούργ [Δεμοεβούρ **A**] πρεσβείας πρὸς [εἰς **P**] τὸν αὐτὸν ὑψηλότατον βασιλέα).⁶⁹ The title *Sacred Orations* suggests a religious theme for the collection. Indeed, even though only one theological work is included among the nine *Sacred Orations*, the nine orations are more religiously oriented in their sensibility than the ten main rhetorical works of Theodore Laskaris. These ten, more secular, works were grouped into a separate collection and had an independent manuscript transmission (the earliest surviving manuscript is the fragmentary thirteenth-century BnF, Suppl. gr. 472, fig. 4). Each of the nine “sacred” orations is preceded with the heading: “by Theodore Laskaris [usually called “Theodore Doukas Laskaris” in **P**], the son of the most exalted emperor of the Romans *kyr* John Doukas, before the embassy of the marquis Berthold von Hohenburg.”

The table of contents lists the nine works in the order in which they were copied without giving a title to the entire collection.⁷⁰ The nine orations are the following:

(Athos, Lavra H 152) and 9 (Athos, Vatopedi, Liturgical Roll 5): in all cases, codices copied by the famous scribe Ioasaph active between 1360 and 1406. See also H. Hunger and O. Kresten, “Archaisierende Minuskel und Hodegonstil im 14. Jahrhundert,” *JÖB* 29 (1980): 186–236, esp. 204–6; I. Pérez Martín, “El ‘Estilo Hodegos’ y su proyección en las escrituras Constantinopolitanas,” in *Actes du VI^e Colloque International de Paléographie Grecque*, ed. B. Atsalos and N. Tsironi (Athens, 2008), 1:71–130 and 3:949–77 (plates).

69 **A**, f. 2r, **P**, f. 1r. See Krikonis, *Θεόδωρου Β'*, 45 and 109 (beginning of the apparatus of the edition of the *Oration on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*).

70 The *pinax* (**A**, f. 1v) has been published by Paléologou, “Deux traités inédits,” 61.

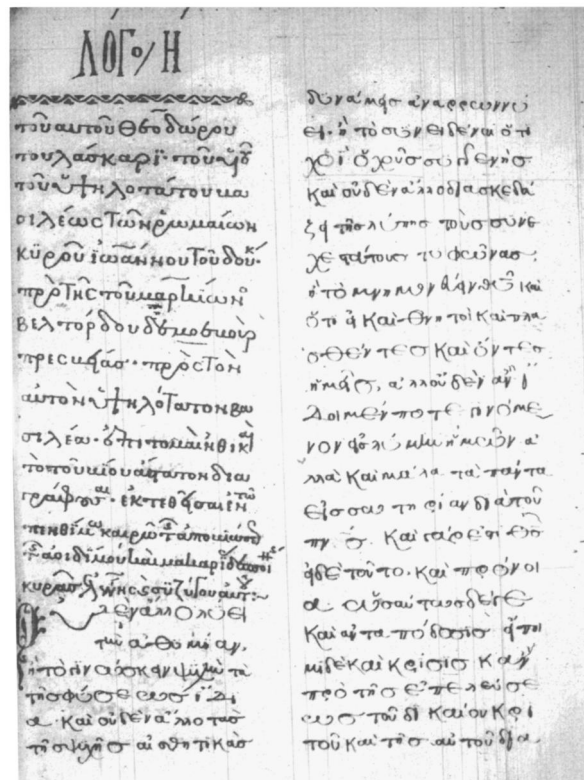


FIG. 1 Ambrosianus gr. C 308 inf. (917), fol. 78r

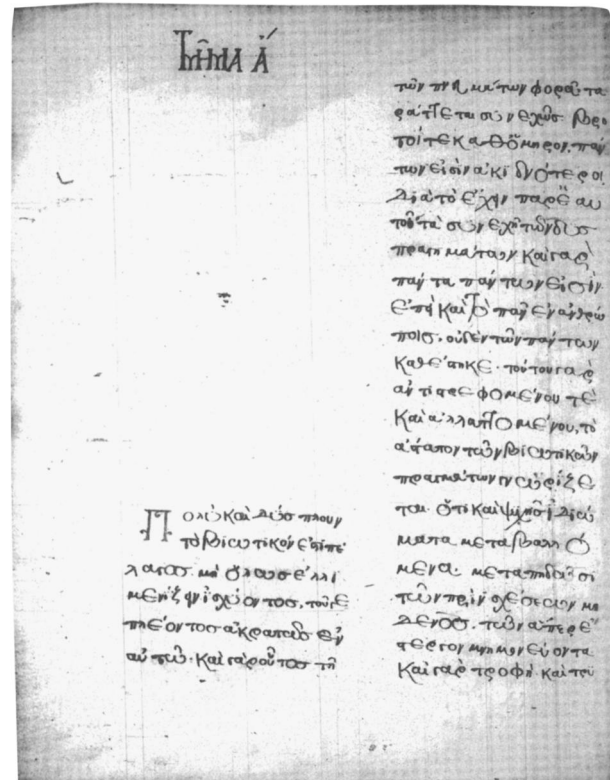


FIG. 2 Ambrosianus gr. C 308 inf. (917), fol. 79v

1. *Oration on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity Addressed to the Scholars Constantine Koubouklarios and John Phaikas* (A ff. 2r–13r; P ff. 1r–24r)⁷¹
2. *A Speech of Gratitude to Our Lord Jesus Christ Composed upon Recovery from a Terrible Illness* (A ff. 13r–25r; P ff. 24r–42r)⁷²

71 Published by Krikonis, *Θεοδώρου Β'*, 109–22. The heading in A omits the phrase “addressed to the scholars Constantine Koubouklarios and John Phaikas.” However the table of contents mentions the two addressees. During his reign as sole emperor (1254–1258), Theodore Laskaris arranged for this oration on the Trinity to be included with a different heading (without any longer mentioning the embassy of Berthold von Hohenburg) as the fifth among the eight orations of his collection *On Christian Theology*. *On Christian Theology* has its own manuscript transmission, represented most prominently by Cod. Vat. gr. 1113 (13th c.). Reproductions from this *Fettaugenstil* manuscript can be conveniently found in Krikonis, *Θεοδώρου Β'*, 203–5.

72 The work is unpublished.

3. *Encomium on Saint Euthymios* (A ff. 25r–35r; P ff. 42r–55v)⁷³
4. *Encomium on the Holy Anargyroi* (A ff. 35v–43v, P ff. 55v–66v)⁷⁴
5. *Oration on Virtue in Gratitude to God While He Was Troubled with Some Problems, Dispelling Some Suspicion and Condemning Evil* (A ff. 43v–58r; P ff. 66v–84v)⁷⁵
6. *Encomium on Wisdom* (A ff. 58r–66r; P ff. 85r–95v)⁷⁶
7. *Oration on Fasting* (A ff. 66r–77v; P ff. 95v–111r)⁷⁷
8. *Moral Pieces Describing the Inconstancy of Life* (A ff. 78r–94r; P ff. 111v–130r)

73 BHG 650d (unpublished).

74 BHG 384c (unpublished).

75 Critical edition by Paléologou, “Deux traités inédits,” 69–81.

76 Critical edition by Paléologou, “Deux traités inédits,” 82–88.

77 The work is unpublished.

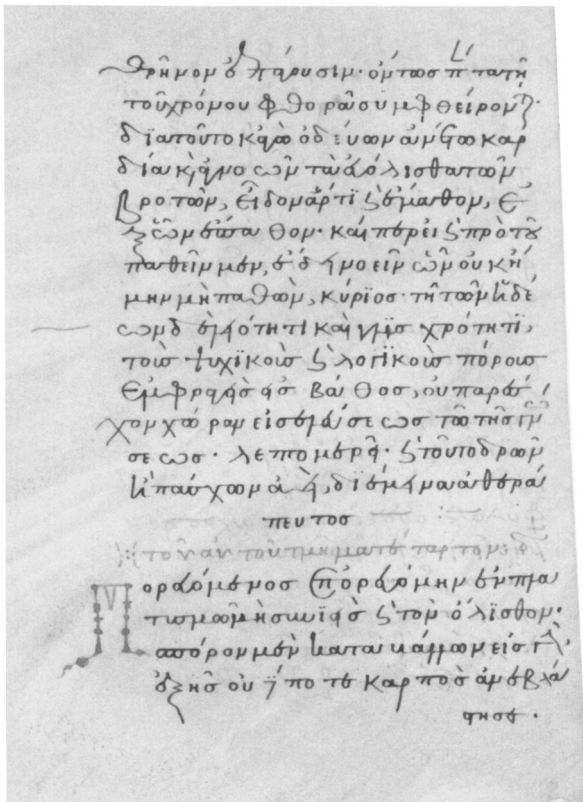


FIG. 3 Paris, BnF, Cod. Gr. 1193, fol. 116v

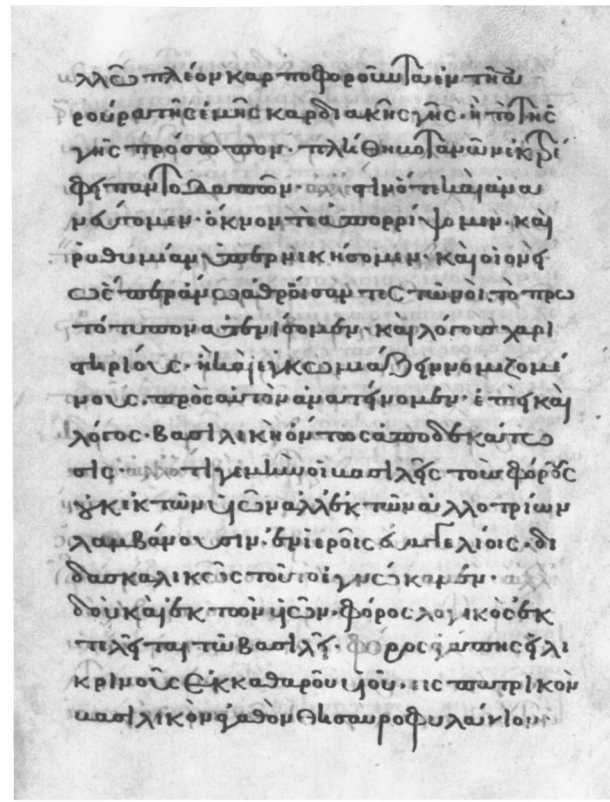


FIG. 4 Paris, BnF, Suppl. Gr. 472, fol. 2r

9. *Apology to Some People Who Trouble Him Malevolently, Demonstrating to Them That What God Has Established Is Stable and Indissoluble and That One Should Honor Those Honored by God* (A ff. 94r–99v; P ff. 130r–137v)⁷⁸

The different layout and features of the text in the two manuscripts demonstrate that **A**, the earlier codex, was envisaged as a more luxurious production than **P**. Even though in both cases the parchment is of medium quality, **A** is much larger. The two-column layout of the text in **A** is standard for high-quality liturgical manuscripts. The endings of some of the orations and of all twelfth essays of the *Moral Pieces* are ornamentally arranged in **A** as a series of downward-pointing triangles. **A** numbers the nine orations as λόγος α', β', γ', etc. (written with uncial letters on the upper margin of the page where each oration begins), while **P** does not number the orations. **A** features gilded initials at the beginning

⁷⁸ Published by Festa in *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, 283–289 on the basis of **A** only.

of each oration and each of the essays of the *Moral Pieces*, while the initials in **P** are written in red ink. In addition, all title headings of the nine orations in **A** as well as the word λόγος set above the margin before the beginning of each oration are written with gilded ink. By contrast, the *pinax* and the headings (preceded by relatively modest floral headpieces) of the orations in **P** are written in red ink. More significantly, the scribe of **A** has left blank spaces before the beginning of the twelve essays of the *Moral Pieces*, which gives reason to believe that whoever was involved in the production of the codex expected ornamental headpieces to be included. Such a large blank space is featured very prominently before the second essay (f. 79v and fig. 2) and appears before the beginning of all subsequent essays. Blank space is found also at the top of folio 13v following the heading overleaf (at the bottom of folio 13r) of the second oration—the speech in gratitude to Jesus Christ after Theodore's recovery from illness. The copyist seems to have left such blank spaces to accommodate decorative headings: a practice amply attested

in illustrated Palaiologan lectionaries and earlier luxury manuscripts, such as the twelfth-century codex of Theodore Prodromos's *Grammar* (Codex Taphou 52).⁷⁹ More significantly, a thirteenth-century luxury codex transmitting Theodore Laskaris's philosophical treatise *On the Natural Communion* (BnF, Suppl. gr. 460), whose production has been attributed to the author's lifetime, features decorative headpieces with floral motifs and birds executed in gold; these headpieces precede each of the six books of the treatise.⁸⁰ Such decorations, however, were never executed in A.

The Relationship between A and P

In their editions of works copied in A and P, Christos Krikonis and Maritimi Palaiologou have suggested that the two manuscripts derive independently from a common archetype.⁸¹ This edition provides me with the occasion to offer some further thoughts. The collation has confirmed the pattern noted by Maritimi Palaiologou: A is far more reliable than P. P contains incorrect spellings (e.g., *ἐνοιαν* on line 84), gives readings less appropriate for the context (e.g., *χρόνου* instead of *τρόχου* on line 119 or *φθοραί* instead of *φοραί* on line 337), or omits words (e.g., *φέρει* on line 416). This circumstance along with the fact that A dates much closer to the lifetime of the author have led me to agree with A rather than P even in cases when neither grammar nor meaning presents an obvious solution: thus, *συζύγου* A rather than the rarer and more elevated *συμβίου* P (line 9); *διασπέρων* A rather than *διασπέρνων* P (line 497) (verbs unattested in lexica).⁸²

Only on a few occasions have readings in P proven to be preferable to those in A: for example,

79 I. Hutter, "Schreiber und Maler der Palaiologenzeit in Konstantinopel," in Atsalos and Tsironi, *Actes* (n. 68 above), 1:159–90 and 3:1007–39 (plates), especially plates 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 28, 29, 30, 25, 45; I. Spatharakis, "An Illuminated Greek Grammar Manuscript in Jerusalem," *JÖB* 35 (1985): 231–44.

80 BnF, Suppl. gr. 460, fols. 11, 101, 261, 371, 511, 691. On this codex, see Rashed, "Sur les deux témoins" (n. 67 above), especially plate 52a.

81 Krikonis, *Θεοδώρου Β'* (n. 59 above), 45, speaks of a *hyparchetype*, while Paléologou, "Deux traités inédits," 68, refers to an archetype produced during the lifetime of Theodore Laskaris. In the preface to his edition of the *Moral Pieces*, L. Tartaglia, "Le *Epitomi Etiche* di Teodoro II Duca Lascari," *Atti Accademia Pontaniana, Napoli*, n.s., 57 (2008): 145–74, at 148, reaches a similar conclusion.

82 See n. 45 above.

the orthography of *Ἑλένης* and *καὶ γώ* (lines 9 and 23); the spelling of the verb *προξενεῖ* (line 416); and the article *τό* in two articular infinitives (line 423). In her edition of the *Oration on Virtue* and *Encomium on Wisdom*, Palaiologou herself highlighted rare cases where the context supports adherence to P.⁸³ I have also agreed with P rather than with A in the version of the names of the author and the ambassador Berthold von Hohenburg. The headings of all nine works in A report the name of the author as Theodore Laskaris, while most headings in P render it as Theodore Doukas Laskaris, with the exception of the first and second orations in P, where he is called Theodore Laskaris. That A, the closer witness to the text, should give the version Theodore Laskaris may seem unexpected, given the fact that the author-emperor signed his name as Theodore Doukas Laskaris.⁸⁴ The two surnames appear consistently on his seals and in the headings of his rhetorical, epistolary, philosophical and theological works.⁸⁵ This is the reason why the "double-barrelled" name has been adopted in this edition. It should be noted, however, that the author was already known by the briefer form Theodore Laskaris during his lifetime, which is how George Akropolites refers to him in verses composed on the occasion of the publication of Theodore's letter collection.⁸⁶

The spelling of the name "Berthold von Hohenburg" in the expression "before the embassy of the marquis Berthold von Hohenburg" is always

83 Paléologou, "Deux traités inédits," 66, n. 36. While sometimes the variant in A is not farfetched and is grammatically acceptable (for example, *γεγέννηται* A : *γεγέννηται* P), it is doubtless that in the case of *παρορώμενον* A : *παρορωμένων* P the sense demands a genitive plural of the participle as in P.

84 See the protocol of his letter to Pope Alexander IV and the *subscriptio* in a letter to George Mouzalon, two rare cases of influence of chancery epistolary usage on the letters of Theodore Laskaris, in *ep.* 143.1–5, ed. Festa, 202; *ep.* 225.44, at 256.

85 C. Stavrakos, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel mit Familiennamen aus der Sammlung des Numismatischen Museums Athen* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 235; *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, 1, 67, 117, 177, 159, 172, 214 (see, however, *ibid.*, 162, for the version of his name as Theodore Laskaris); Festa, "Κοσμική Δήλωση," 97; Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia, 2, 24, 68, 86, 96, 110, 120, 142, 154, 199. The thirteenth-century luxury manuscript of *On the Natural Communion* (BnF, Suppl. gr. 460) gives a version of his name as "Theodore Doukas Laskaris." By contrast, the fourteenth-century BnF, Cod. gr. 2004 transmitting the same text renders the name as "Theodore Laskaris."

86 *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. Heisenberg and Wirth, 2:8.19.

given as Βελτόρδου Δεμοεβούρ in **A** and Βελτόρδου Δεμοεμβούργ in **P**. A third version of his name, again with a final gamma, appears in the headings found before letter clusters in Cod. Laur. Plut. 59, 35 (14th century), the main codex of Theodore Laskaris's letters: Βελτόρδου Δεοεμβούργ.⁸⁷ In all these forms the German name has entered Greek in its Latinized version (hence "de" rather than "von"), by which the marquis is known in Latin texts written in thirteenth-century Italy.⁸⁸ In the case of **A**, the final gamma has been silenced through omission (Δεμοεβούρ), which may suggest the intermediacy of old French. As the version with a final gamma is closer to the actual name of the ambassador, it has been preferred.

The *Moral Pieces* in both **A** and **P** contains cases of copying slips. The copyist of **A** noticed an omission due to *homoioteleuton* (lines 438–41) and immediately supplied the missing text in the margin. After the copy was produced, a corrector (**AP**^c) using black ink went over the text. The corrections deal only with matters of inflection and orthography as well as with minor textual "errors"; they offer no truly substantial revisions. **P** almost always agrees with the corrector (lines 28, 30, 234, 236, 240, 244, 337, 360, 363, 456–57, 457, 491, 492, 493, 523, 544), but interestingly follows on two occasions the text in **A** before the correction (lines 142–43, 369–71). The same pattern is observable in the yet unpublished *Oration on Fasting*, the seventh sacred oration, which was copied immediately before the *Moral Pieces*: here **P** again agrees most often with the corrector in **A**, but sometimes follows the text before the correction.⁸⁹

87 *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, I, 117, 151, 159, 162. Festa emended the name to Δε'Οεμβούργ. I intend to discuss in a forthcoming monograph the role played by the embassy of Berthold von Hohenburg for the publication of Theodore's literary works.

88 See, for example, B. Capasso, *Historia diplomatica regni Siciliae inde ab anno 1250 ad annum 1266* (Naples, 1874), 8, 12, 13, 24, 30, 40, 77, 78, 83, 84.

89 In her edition of *Oration on Virtue and Encomium on Wisdom*, Paléologou, "Deux traités inédits," 67, n. 39, has noted that **P** agrees sometimes with **AP**^c (= **A**² of her edition), but mostly with **A**^{ac} (= **A** of her edition). The picture in the *Moral Pieces* is the reverse: **P** agrees almost exclusively with **AP**^c. The pattern observed by Palaiologou is not as clearcut. Thus, one should read "157 αὐτοῖς **A**²**P** : αὐτῶν **A**" (and not "157 αὐτοῖς **AP** : αὐτῶν **A**²") in the apparatus to line 157 of her edition of the *Oration on Virtue*. See Paléologou, "Deux traités inédits," 74. The editor has not noted in the apparatus that ἐκ τοῦ in

P itself contains an omission due to *homoioteleuton*. The underlined text below has been dropped in **P**, and the scribe modified the immediately following verb ἐξετάζω into a participle in order to smooth the flow of the resultant phrase. This gives the impression that the copyist of **P** was capable of introducing minor redactions.

Lines 240–43:

A: Διὸ θαυμάζων τὰ ἅπερ οὐ δεῖ θαυμάζειν τοὺς θαυμαστάς, τεθαύμακα τὰ τῆς φύσεως. Θαυμάζων δὲ τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἐξετάζω αὐτά, ἐν οἷσπερ...

P: Διὸ θαυμάζων τὰ ἅπερ οὐ δεῖ θαυμάζειν τοὺς θαυμαστάς, τεθαύμακα τὰ τῆς φύσεως, ἐξετάζων αὐτά, ἐν οἷσπερ...

The difference in the numeration of the essays (τμήματα) in **A** and **P** is particularly intriguing. That Theodore Laskaris envisaged a twelve-part structure for the *Moral Pieces* cannot, in my view, be doubted, for he was interested in numerology and the symbolism of numbers.⁹⁰ But there is a problem. **A** does not assign any number to the first essay, which it treats as a sort of *prooimion*; it starts with the second essay which it designates as the first τμήμα. By contrast, **P** assigns numbers to all essays from the beginning, which leads to a consistent mismatch in numeration, with the numbers in **P** running ahead of those in **A**. Curiously, this mismatch continues until the eleventh essay, which both **A** and **P** number as the tenth τμήμα. **P** thus commits an oversight in assigning the number ten twice, but corrects the slip by numbering the following, last section of the *Moral Pieces* as part twelve.

The above observations on the two manuscripts result in the following conclusions. **A** is a closer witness to the archetype of the *Sacred Orations*, of which it is a direct copy. The archetype seems to have been a deluxe production prepared during the lifetime of Theodore Laskaris, not unlike BnF, Suppl. gr. 460, which contains his philosophical treatise *On the Natural Communion*.

the phrase ἐκ τοῦ παραπτά in the immediately following phrase (**A** 49v, lines 157–58) is the work of a corrector, which **P** again follows.

90 E. von Ivánka, "Mathematische Symbolik in den beiden Schriften des Kaisers Theodoros II. Laskaris ΔΗΛΩΣΙΣ ΦΥΣΙΚΗ [sic] und ΠΕΡΙ ΦΥΣΙΚΗΣ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑΣ," *ByzF* 4 (1972): 138–41; G. Richter, *Theodoros Dukas Laskaris: Der natürliche Zusammenhang; Ein Zeugnis vom Stand der byzantinischen Philosophie in der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Amsterdam, 1989), 72–77.

The separate parts of the *Moral Pieces* probably had no numbers in the archetype, and were preceded by decorated headpieces, which led to blank spaces being left in **A** in an attempt to emulate the model. That **A** is a copy rather than the unfinished deluxe archetype manuscript itself is suggested by its medium-quality parchment. The copyist of **A** numbered the parts, but did not do so from the beginning, which led him to count to eleven rather than twelve. The scribe of **P** had the mindset of a redactor, as seen from the way he treated his copying omission due to *homoioteleuton*. He introduced the correct numbers although not without confusion in the process. The question arises whether **P** is indeed independently derived from the archetype, as scholars have argued so far, or is a redaction of **A** (or a manuscript derived from **A**). This dilemma, I believe, can only be posed at this stage without a definitive resolution. The edition of the remaining unpublished works by Theodore Laskaris in **A** and **P** should bring fresh evidence to bear on this issue.

This Edition: Punctuation, Accentuation, and Orthography

My punctuation has benefited from the manuscript punctuation, especially of **A** (the closer textual witness). In this I have followed the recent emphasis on the importance of considering scribal punctuation in preparing critical editions.⁹¹ Theodore Laskaris himself recognized in his letters the role of punctuation in clarifying meaning.⁹² At the same time modern punctuation does not frame the same syntactical units marked out by the scribes. The copyists of **A** and **P** occasionally disagree with each other but both have a tendency to overpunctuate, placing punctuation signs before *poly-syndeta* or direct objects.

The edition retains nonclassical word forms and accents that philologists nowadays consider characteristic of the orthography of medieval Greek texts:⁹³ thus,

91 See most recently D. Reinsch, "Stixis und Hören," in Atsalos and Tsironi, *Actes* (n. 68 above), 1:259–69.

92 *Ep.* 29, ed. Festa, 38–39.

93 See the prefatory remarks accompanied by rich references and bibliography by J. Munitiz, *Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia sive curriculum vitae necnon epistula universalior* (Turnhout, 1984), xlvii–liv; D. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, vol. 1 (Berlin and New York, 2001), 34*–52*; F. Kolovou, *Michaelis Choniatae Epistulae* (Berlin and New York, 2001), 31*–41*; K.

διατοῦτο and διαταῦτα which the copyists of **A** and **P** (and presumably the author) consistently write *iunctim* rather than *divisim* (with two exceptions in **P** on lines 295 and 348); an accented τέ encountered mostly after paroxytones and perispomena;⁹⁴ and the accented indefinite pronouns τίς and τί (line 187: παθῶν τίς; line 203: ὃν τί; lines 221–22: οὐκ ἔστι τί).⁹⁵ One of the two pronouns in the expression τί τίς on lines 54 and 162 can be considered to be either a second enforcing interrogative or an accented indefinite pronoun. The enclitic δέ found in **A**, but absent from **P**, has been kept (lines 173 and 473).⁹⁶

I have consistently added iota subscripts, as required. I have normalized the orthography of ταυτό found in **A** and **P** to ταὐτό (line 267) and τὰ νῦν (as written once in **A** on line 165) to τανῦν, which is the form preferred elsewhere in both **A** and **P**. I have indicated minor differences in the orthography and accentuation (such as καγώ **A** and κάγώ **P** on line 23). Even though such details are often considered unnecessary in modern critical editions, I thought that including them in the apparatus may contribute to furthering our knowledge of scribal practices.

I have decided to emend the form πεφυσιωμένον (line 118), so written in both **A** and **P**, to πεφυσιωμένον. The reason lies in the circumstance that the letters of Theodore Laskaris twice feature the perfect participle of the verb φυσιάω without two sigmas, while forms of this verb with two sigmas are not attested in the lexica or the *TLG*.⁹⁷ In her edition of the *Oration on Virtue* Palaiologou faced a similar dilemma and decided to emend a word with a duplicated consonant: πατταγαῖς as reported by both **A** and **P** has been corrected to

Oikonomakos, *Γεώργιος Παχυμέρης, Φιλοσοφία: Βιβλίον ἐνδέκατον: Τὰ Ἠθικά, ἥτοι τὰ Νικομάχεια* (Athens, 2005), 41*–63*.

94 J. Noret, "L'accentuation de τε en grec byzantin," *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 516–18; Reinsch and Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 1:48*–52*.

95 J. Noret, "Quand donc rendrons-nous à quantité d'indéfinis, prétendument enclitiques, l'accent qui leur revient?" *Byzantion* 67 (1987): 191–95, esp. 194–95 (rules 2b and 3). See also Reinsch and Kambylis, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 1:41*–45*.

96 A thirteenth-century manuscript closely associated with Nikephoros Blemmydes uses regularly an enclitic δέ, including in cases when the enclitic δέ follows μέν. See Munitiz, *Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia*, li, n. 112; J. Noret and C. de Vocht, "Une orthographe insolite et nuancée, celle de Nicéphore Blemmyde, ou à propos du δέ enclitique," *Byzantion* 55 (1985): 493–518.

97 *Ep.* 6.3, ed. Festa, 9; *ep.* 73.23, at 100.

παταγαῖς. In this case however there is a strong argument for retaining the manuscript reading, for Theodore Laskaris elsewhere uses the form παττάγους.⁹⁸ Such are the kinds of decisions that modern editors of Byzantine texts often need to make.

Classical authors and biblical texts cited in the apparatus of the edition follow the standard format. In addition, the following modern editions have been used:

- Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca*
Bibliothèque historique, livre I, ed. P. Bertrac,
 trans. Y. Vernière (Paris, 1993)
- Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Statua regia*
Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριᾶς
und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes
und Georgios Oinaïotes, ed. H. Hunger and
 I. Ševčenko (Vienna, 1986)

⁹⁸ Paléologou, “Deux traités inédits,” 76.213. See Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia, 112.49.

- Proclus, *Theologia platonica*
Théologie platonicienne, ed. H. D. Saffrey and
 L. G. Westerink, 6 vols. (Paris, 1968–1997)

- Pseudo-Dionysios Areopagites, *Coelestis hierarchia*,
La hiérarchie céleste, ed. G. Heil, trans. M. de
 Gandillac (Paris, 1959)

- Synesios, *De regno*
Synesii Cyrenensis opuscula, ed. N. Terzaghi
 (Rome, 1944)

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The *Moral Pieces* by Theodore II Laskaris: Critical Edition and Translation

Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Θεοδώρου Δούκα τοῦ Λάσκαρι, τοῦ A 78r,
 υἱοῦ τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων P 111r
 κυροῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δούκα, πρὸ τῆς τοῦ
 μαρκίωνος Βελτόρδου Δεμοεμβούργ πρεσβείας
 5 πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν ὑψηλότατον βασιλέα, ἐπιτομαὶ P 112r
 ἡθικαὶ τὸ τοῦ βίου ἄστατον διαγράφουσαι,
 ἐκτεθεῖσαι ἐν τῷ πενθίμῳ καιρῷ τῆς ἀποβιώσεως
 τῆς αἰοιδίμου καὶ μακαρίας δεσποίνης κυρᾶς
 Ἑλένης καὶ συζύγου αὐτοῦ.

10 I. Οὐδὲν ἄλλο λύει τὴν ἀθυμίαν, ἢ τὸ γινώσκειν
 ψυχὴν τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἴδια. Καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο τὰς
 τῆς ψυχῆς αἰσθητικὰς δυνάμεις ἀναρρωννύει, ἢ
 τὸ συνειδέναι, ὅτι χοῖ ὁ χοῦς συγγενής. Καὶ οὐδὲν
 ἄλλο διασκεδάζει τῆς λύπης τοὺς συνεχεστάτους
 15 τυφῶνας, ἢ τὸ μνημονεύειν Θεοῦ, καὶ ὅτι εἰ καὶ
 θνητοὶ καὶ πλασθέντες καὶ ὄντες ἡμεῖς, ἀλλ'
 οὐδὲν ἂν ἰδοίμεν ποτε γινόμενον εἰς λύμην ἡμῶν,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ μάλα τὰ πάντα εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ τοῦ
 πνεύματος. Καὶ γάρ ἐστι Θεός. Εἰ δὲ τοῦτο,
 20 καὶ πρόνοια ὡσαύτως δέ γε καὶ ἀνταπόδοσις. P 112v
 Εἴπομι δὲ καὶ κρίσις, καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἐπελεύσεως
 τοῦ δικαίου κριτοῦ καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ διακρίσεως. A 78v
 Κἀγὼ ὀνομάζω τὰ δικαστηριώδη ὄργανα,
 κρίσιν λέγω τὴν καὶ διάκρισιν. Ἐπειδὴ Θεοῦ ἐν
 25 ὕψει προκαθημένου ἐπὶ πολλῶν χερουβικῶν καὶ
 σεραφικῶν ταγματῶν τοῦτο μαρτυρούντων τῶν
 δούλων τὴν καὶ παρισταμένων, οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἴσον
 Θεῷ. Ἐπεὶ καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι νόες δουλικῶς τούτῳ
 παρίστανται, δι' οὗ μὲν καὶ εἰς ἅπερ βούλεται

13 χοῖ ὁ χοῦς συγγενής cf. Gen. 3:19, Ps 102:14 | 24–27 cf.
 ps.-Dionysios Areopagites, *Coelestis hierarchia*, VI–VII,
 ed. Heil, 103–19 | 28 πρῶτοι νόες Proclus, *Theologia pla-*
tonica III 21, edd. Saffrey-Westerink, III 75.14–16; ps.-
 Dionysios Areopagites, *Coelestis hierarchia* VIII 2, ed.
 Heil, 123.28–29

Λόγος H' ante titulum in margine superiore A |
 1 Θεοδώρου Δούκα τοῦ Λάσκαρι Θεοδώρου του [sic]
 Λάσκαρι A | 2 τῶν Ῥωμαίων om. P | 4 Δεμοεμβούρ
 A | 9 Ἑλένης A συζύγου] συμβίου P τμήμα πρῶτον
 post αὐτοῦ praebeet P | 23 καγὼ A | 25 ἐπὶ post ἐπὶ
 πολλῶν add. P | 27 ἴσον AP | 28 Θεῷ AP^cP: Θεοῦ A^{ac}

Moral Pieces Describing the Inconstancy of Life,
 which were composed during the period of mourn-
 ing for the passing of the ever-remembered and
 blessed empress Lady Elena, his wife, by the same
 Theodore Doukas Laskaris, the son of the most
 exalted emperor of the Romans, *kyr* John Doukas,
 before the embassy of the marquis Berthold von
 Hohenburg to the same most exalted emperor.

I. Nothing dispels despondency other than the
 soul's knowledge of the characteristics of its nature.
 Nothing strengthens afresh the perceptive powers
 of the soul other than realizing that dust is akin to
 dust. Nothing drives away the most frequent storms
 of sorrow other than recalling God to one's mind
 and the fact that even though we are, and have been
 created, mortal, we shall never see anything hap-
 pening to our harm, but rather everything shall
 happen for our salvation through the Spirit. For
 God exists, and if so, there is also providence and
 retribution. But I would also say that there is judg-
 ment even before the arrival of the Just Judge and
 His decision. I name the judicial instruments, call-
 ing them judgment and decision. As God presides
 on high over many cherubic and seraphic hosts who
 bear witness to this as His servants and slaves, there
 is nothing equal to God. For the first intellects¹
 stand like slaves beside Him, through whom nature

1 In the *Celestial Hierarchy* Pseudo-Dionysios calls the angelic
 hosts the "first intellects."

30 ὀλισθαίνειν ἢ φύσις ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀποδιῶσταμένη
 ἀναρρωννύεται, δι' οὗ ἀρεταίνει καὶ δι' οὗ
 ἐπήχθη καὶ διαμένει, εἰ καὶ παρὰ τὸ ταύτης
 πολυειδὲς εἰς τὸ λυθῆναι ἐπείγεται. Τοιγαροῦν
 πολυειδὴς ὑπάρχουσα ἡ ψυχὴ, τρέπεται ἐξ
 35 ὁδοῦ εἰς ὁδὸν καὶ ἐκ τόπου καὶ σχημάτων τε P 113f
 καὶ σημείων εἰς ἑτέρας ἰδεῶν θέσεις ὁμοῦ τε
 καὶ σχήματα, καὶ τυρβάζεται περιστρεφομένη,
 καὶ αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν λυμαίνεται ἐν καιρῷ εἰς
 40 ἡδονὰς ὁρμῶσα καὶ σπαταλῶσα. Διὸ μυριάκις
 παραφθειρομένη συμφθείρει τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν
 αὐτῆς, ἡδοναῖς χαυνουμένη καὶ τὸ τῆς αὐλίας
 παραθεωροῦσα ἀξίωμα. Διατοῦτο καὶ τὰς τοῦ
 καιροῦ παραφθορὰς μινύουσα ἑαυτῇ, ἐπεὶ καὶ
 αὕτη παραφθορὰς οἰκοθεν παραφθείρεται, A 79f
 45 ἀγχιστεύει φθορᾷ καὶ στρέφεται κυκλικῶς
 τὸν χρόνον μιμουμένη τὸν ἄστατον· καὶ γὰρ
 ῥοπὴ καιροῦ ἀμυδρὰ καὶ τυχικὴ δυστροπία καὶ
 χαύνωσις ψυχικὴ καὶ πραγμάτων μεταβολὴ
 τοῖς δοκοῦσιν εἶναι τὸ μὴ εἶναι παρέχουσι,
 50 καὶ τὰ ἐν ἰλαρότητι βαίνοντα τῷ τραχεῖ τῆς P 113v
 λύπης περιστοιχίζουσι. Βαβαὶ τῆς ἀπαταλῆς
 ζωῆς. Ὡ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος. Κερδαίνει οὐδὲν πᾶς
 ἀνὴρ, ὃ μὴ κερδανεῖ περὶ τὸ κερδαίνειν τῷ τὰ
 πάντα κερδαίνοντι. Ἀλλὰ τί τίς διαπράττεται;
 55 Ὅντως οὐδέν. Τοῖς ἀστάτως ρέουσι μαχέσεται
 τίς; Χρόνου καὶ γὰρ ὁρμῇ καὶ φορᾷ ρεύματος
 ποταμοῦ καὶ κινήσει πνεύματος οἱ βίοι τῶν
 βροτῶν παρεικάζονται. Καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα πάντ'
 ἀλλήλοις ἐξομοιούμενα, ἀστάτως ρέουσιν αἰεὶ
 60 καὶ παρέρχονται, μηδὲν ὅλως ἔχοντα στάσιμον.

regains strength after distancing herself from Him by whatever lapses she wishes to commit. Through Him nature is virtuous and through Him nature was created and persists, even if she hastens to come to an end due to her composite character. So then the soul, being composite, turns from one path to another and from one place, shape, and sign into other sets of forms and shapes, and is unsettled as she goes in a circle, and harms herself when turning occasionally to pleasure and living in profligacy.² Being corrupted one thousand times, the soul therefore ruins her eye³ as she is slackened by pleasure⁴ and as she spurns the dignity of immateriality. For this reason, after absorbing into herself the corruptions of the moment—and because she corrupts herself with corruption out of her own will—the soul nears destruction and revolves in circles imitating the inconstancy of time. For the obscure tendency of the moment, the waywardness of fortune, the slackening of the soul, and the change of circumstances impart nonexistence to things appearing to exist and beset the cheerful traveler with the harshness of sorrow. A deceptive life, alas! Oh, nonexistence! No man profits in anything if he does not profit with a view to profiting Him who profits in all things. But who will do anything? No one can do anything really. Who will struggle with the inconstant flow? For the lives of mortals are like the impulse of time, the flow of a river current, and the movement of a breeze. For all of these resemble one another and ever flow inconstantly and make their way with no constancy whatsoever.

40–41 τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν αὐτῆς Plato, *Rep.* 518c, 533d

30 αὐτοῦ AP^cP | 31 ἀναρρωννύεται scripsi, ἀναρωννύεται A : ἀναρρωννύεται P | 35 τε P | 40 καὶ post συμφθείρει add. P | 43 μινύουσα AP^cP | 44 αὕτη] αὐτῇ P | 50 τὸ τραχὺ P | 52 ὄντως P κερδανῇ P | 53 τὰ P om.

2 For the notion of the circular motion of the soul, see Plato, *Timaeus* 43a–d, 47d; Pseudo-Dionysios, *The Divine Names*, IV 9. See also P. S. MacDonald, *History of the Concept of Mind: Speculations about Soul, Mind and Spirit from Homer to Hume* (Aldershot, 2003), 51–52.

3 On the early Christian adoption of the Platonic notion of the intellect as “eye of the soul,” see K. Ware, “The Soul in Greek Christianity,” in *From Soul to Self*, ed. M. J. C. Crabbe (London, 1999), 6. Theodore Laskaris refers elsewhere to the intellect as an eye of the soul. See *On Virtue*, in Paléologou, “Deux traités inédits,” 70.37–39; *On the Elements* and *On the Heavens*, in N. Festa, “Κοσμικὴ Διήλωση,” *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 11 (1897–98): 110.18–19; 12 (1899): 6.29–7.4.

4 Theodore Laskaris contrasts the slackening or weakening of his soul by pleasure to its hardening through virtue (see lines 48, 78, and 428).

II. Πολὺ καὶ δύσπλουν τὸ βιωτικόν ἐστι A 79v
 πέλαγος, μὴ ὅλως ἐλλιμενίζειν ἰσχύοντος τοῦ γε P 114r
 πλέοντος ἀκρατῶς ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ γὰρ οὗτος τῇ τῶν
 πνευμάτων φορᾷ ταράττεται συνεχῶς. Βροτοί
 65 τε καθ' Ὅμηρον πάντων εἰσὶν ἀκιδνότεροι
 διὰ τὸ ἔχειν παρ' ἑαυτοῖς τὰ συνεχῇ τῶν
 δυσπραγμάτων· καὶ γὰρ πάντα πάντων εἰσὶν,
 ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις οὐδὲν τῶν πάντων
 καθέστηκε. Τούτου γὰρ ἀντιστρεφόμενου τὲ
 70 καὶ ἀλλαττομένου, τὸ ἄστατον τῶν βιωτικῶν
 πραγμάτων γνωρίζεται, ὅτι καὶ ψυχῆς ιδιώματα
 μεταβαλλόμενα μεταπηδῶσι τῶν πρὶν σχέσεων,
 μηδενὸς τῶν ἄπερ ἔστεργον μνημονεύοντα.
 Καὶ γὰρ τροφή καὶ τρυφή καὶ σπατάλη καὶ A 80r
 75 ὑπηρεσία καὶ τιμὴ καὶ πομπή καὶ ἄλλα ὅσα
 τιμᾶν εἴωθε φύσις ἢ τῶν βροτῶν ἀλυσιτελῇ
 καὶ ἀνόνητα, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐκ τούτων εἰς ἀρετὴν
 καὶ στηριγμόν. Ἡ ψυχὴ παγιοῦται καὶ οὐδενὶ
 τούτων ἐπευφραίνεται, ὥς μηδὲν ἐχόντων P 114v
 80 τὸ ἔμμονον. Χρόνῳ καὶ γὰρ ἀφανίζονται
 καὶ τύχῃ μηδὲν ὄντα νομίζονται, διότι καὶ
 τῇ ἀκαραδοκῇ ταῦτα φθορᾷ ὑπαγόμενα,
 λυποῦσι μᾶλλον ἢ τέρπουσι. Ταλαίπωρε φύσις,
 τί διαπράξῃ; Εἰληχας μίξιν τὴν ὑπὲρ ἔννοϊαν,
 85 εὐγενὲς ἐκέρδηςας ὄνομα, τὸ καλεῖσθαι σε
 λογικὴν. Εὐμοιρεῖς λόγων, ἔχεις θειοτέραν
 πνοήν, ἀλλ' ἰδοὺ καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀναισθήτων
 ὑπάρχεις δυστυχεστέρα, παρὰ τοῦ χρόνου
 δεχομένη τὰς δεινὰς ταύτας παραφθοράς. ῥέει
 90 μὲν γὰρ χρόνος, ῥέουσι δὲ βίοι, διαδιδράσκουσι
 τὰ νομιζόμενα. Τὸ ἐσόμενον ἀπροόρατον, οὐδεὶς
 μὲν ὁρᾷ, πάντες πλανῶνται—οἱ ἔχοντες ὥς μὴ A 80v
 ἔχοντες, οἱ κλαίοντες, οἱ γελῶντες, οἱ παίζοντες,
 οἱ σπουδάζοντες. Τὰ φάρμακα ἀτονοῦσι, τὸ P 115r
 95 διὰ τοῦ χρόνου τῆς φθορᾶς νόσημα ἐπαύξει,
 ὁ πλοῦς εἰς ναυάγιον, ἀπόλλυνται τὰ τῆς νεώς,
 καθεύδει ἢ κυβερνώσα ψυχὴ, τῇ ἀμελείᾳ τὸ
 ἰστίον ῥήγνυται, τὸ πηδάλιον ἀπορρίπτεται,
 ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος, ἥλιος δύνει, ἢ νῦξ προκόπτει,
 100 ἢ τρικυμία ἐπαύξει, ὁ φόρτος πολὺς, μακρὰ
 ἢ ὁδός, ὁ χρόνος βραχύς, τὰ συμβησόμενα
 ἄδηλα, πάντα δεινὰ, ἐγγὺς ὁ κίνδυνος, ὁ

64–65 *Odyssey* 8.169; 18.130

61 τμήμα α' A: τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα δεύτερον P | 67 πάντα
 om. P | 69 τε P | 79 μηδὲν] μὴ δὲν P | 81 μηδὲν]
 μὴ δὲν P | 84 ἔννοϊαν P | 85 τὸ A^pP: τοῦ A^{ac} |
 90 διαδιδράσκουσι] διαδράσκουσι P

II. Large is the sea of life and hard to cross, because
 the man who powerlessly sails on it is utterly unable
 to find harbor. For he is constantly disturbed by
 the motion of the winds. According to Homer,
 “mortals are weaker than everything,”⁵ because
 they have in themselves continuous misfortunes.
 For they are in every way weaker than everything,
 because everything in humankind has come to be
 nothing at all. For as everything in humankind is
 turned upside down and altered, the inconstancy
 of the affairs of life becomes evident, because also
 the properties of the soul, being changed, depart
 from their prior state and do not remember any-
 thing they cherished. For food, luxury, comfort,
 servants, honor, pomp, and everything else mortal
 nature is accustomed to value are of no benefit
 and use; none of them is for the sake of virtue and
 edification. The soul hardens and enjoys none of
 these things since they have no permanence. For
 they disappear with time and are considered to be
 nothing on account of fortune, because when they
 pass away unexpectedly, they bring sorrow rather
 than joy. Wretched nature, what will you do? You
 have been allotted a mixed composition beyond
 comprehension, you have earned a noble name in
 that you are called rational. You abound in rational
 thoughts and have such a divine spirit, but lo
 and behold, you are unluckier even than senseless
 objects when you incur these horrible corruptions
 caused by time. For time flows, lives pass, customs
 slip away. The future is unpredictable, no one sees
 it, everyone is deluded: the possessors because they
 have no possessions, those who weep and those
 who laugh, the playful and the diligent.⁶ Medicines
 are ineffective, the disease of corruption grows with
 the passage of time, the ship is wrecked, its equip-
 ment is destroyed, the soul at the helm falls asleep,
 the sail is torn asunder through carelessness, the
 rudder is tossed overboard, the wind is adverse, the
 sun sets, night advances, the storm intensifies, the
 burden is great, the journey is long, time is short,
 the future is unclear, everything is terrible, danger is

5 For this Homeric expression that impressed Theodore, see *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, letter 94, ed. Festa, 127.54.

6 Theodore Laskaris plays on the opposition of παίζω vs. σπουδάζω in his letters. See *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ep. 62.4, ed. Festa, 91; ep. 103.74–75, at 142; ep. 115.23–24, at 160.

ὄλεθρος ἀπαραίτητος. Τῷ γὰρ χρονικῷ
διαστήματι συνδιαλυομένης τῆς τοῦ βίου νηός,
105 τὰ ταύτης πάντα διασπείρεται καὶ διόλλυται.

III. Ἐπὶ τὰ τῶν εὐτυχημάτων ὕψη ὁδεύων, A 81r
ἔσχον ἐκεῖθεν παρὰ τῆς τύχης τὴν τῶν χρονικῶν
πεῖραν ἀστασιῶν· ἐπὶ τὰς τῆς λύπης ἀκρωρείας
διατοῦτο ἐνδιατρίβων ἔγνω τὰ τοῖς βροτοῖς μὲν P 115v
110 τιμώμενα, χρόνῳ δὲ λυόμενα, καὶ τέλεον μηδὲν
ἑαυτοῖς κλέος καταλιμπάνοντα· ἐπὶ τὰ τοῦ βίου
πελάγη ἔχων τὸν πλοῦν, ἐδιδάχθην τούτου τὸ
ἄστατον. Καὶ πάντων τούτων τὴν πεῖραν λαβὼν,
καὶ τῇ ψυχικῇ δυνάμει κύκλωσε τείνας τὸν
115 ὀφθαλμόν, καὶ πάντα περιβλεψάμενος, μὴ ὄντα
πάντα ὁρῶ θρήνου ταῦτα ἢ χαρᾶς ἄξια. Ἐπαινῶ
τὸν Ἡρακλείτου θρήνον, ἢ τὴν Σεσώστριδος
βασιλείαν καὶ τὸ πεφυσιωμένον ἄρμα αὐτοῦ·
θαυμάζω μάλ᾽ αὖ τοῦ τροχοῦ τὴν στροφὴν, ἢ
120 τὸν τοῦ Κροίσου πλοῦτον· ὑπερεξαίρω τὸ τοῦ
Καρίνου λιτόν, ἢ τὰ τοῦ τερατοποιῶν καινότερα
μηχανήματα· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὅπερ εἶναι νομίζεται
τῶν μηδὲ νομιζομένων τε καὶ οὐκ ὄντων. Ἐπεὶ A 81v

near, perdition is inevitable. For as the ship of life is
fully destroyed with the passage of time, everything
in it is dispersed and perishes.

III. Journeying on the heights of happiness, I
received there at the hands of fortune the experi-
ence of time's inconstancy. Dwelling on account of
this on the peaks of grief, I learned that there are
things valued by mortals but destroyed by time and
leaving behind no glory in them in the end. Sailing
across the sea of life, I was taught its inconstancy.
After experiencing all this and turning my eyes
all around with my spiritual strength and observ-
ing everything, I see everything void of existence,
matters worthy of lamentation rather than joy. I
praise the lament of Heraclitus⁷ rather than the
kingdom of Sesostris and his ostentatious chariot.⁸
I marvel at the turning of the wheel⁹ rather than at
Croesus's wealth. I exalt the simplicity of Carinus¹⁰
rather than the novel devices of the wonderwork-
er.¹¹ For what is considered to exist of the things
that are unappreciated and nonexistent is nothing.

7 Heraclitus was known as the weeping philosopher in antiquity. Lucian contrasts him to the laughing Democritus in *Creeds for Sale*. See C. E. Lutz, "Democritus and Heraclitus," *The Classical Journal* 49 (1954): 309–14.

8 According to Diodorus of Sicily, the mythical Egyptian king Sesostris had the habit of yoking four subject kings to his chariot instead of horses. In an elaboration of the story popular in Byzantium, one of the harnessed kings is said to have stared at the revolving wheel of the chariot, comparing it to the inconstancy of fortune. Sesostris then released the kings from their yoke. See R. C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman: Introductory Essay, Text, Translation, and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool, 1985), frag. 6.1, 64.213–66.238; Theophrastus, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1883), 273. Theophylaktos Simokattes, *Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1972), 343.10–344.15. Nikephoros Blemmydes' mirror of princes *Imperial Statue* uses the story as an illustration of the fickleness of fortune and may have been Theodore's immediate source.

9 That is, the wheel of fortune as in the Sesostris anecdote.

10 In his oration *On Imperial Rule* (early fifth century), Synesius tells a moralistic story about the simple conduct of Emperor Carinus (283–285). While Carinus was on campaign against the Persians, his enemies were so impressed by his plain clothes, coarse food, and bald head that they thought him invincible. A succinct version of the anecdote is reported by Psellos in his *Historia Syntomos*. See W. J. Aerts, ed., *Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos* (Berlin and New York, 1990), ch. 53 (34).

11 It is unclear which "wonderworker" is meant here.

117–19 τὴν Σεσώστριδος βασιλείαν . . . τοῦ τροχοῦ τὴν στροφὴν Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* I, 58.1–2, ed. Bertrac, 118.7–21; Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Statua regia*, 53–55, edd. Hunger and Ševčenko, 58–60 | 120–21 τὸ τοῦ Καρίνου λιτόν Synesios, *De regno*, 16, ed. Terzaghi, 36.1–38.8

106 τμήμα β' A : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα τρίτον P | 110 μηδὲν] μὴ δὲν P | 118 πεφυσιωμένον scripsi, πεφυσιωμένον AP | 119 τροχοῦ] χρόνου P | 122 οὐδὲν] οὐ P | 123 μηδὲ scripsi, μήδε P : μηδε A τε P

καὶ τὰ νομιζόμενα τοῖς μὴ νομίζουσι φθειρόμενοι P 116r
 125 καταλιμπάνουσιν οἱ βροτοί, ὄντως πάντα
 νομίζονται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχει τούτων τὸ στάσιμον.
 Οἷμοι τί τοῦτο; Τίς ἢ τοῦ χρόνου στροφή;
 Τί τοῦ μόρου τὸ ἀπαραίτητον; Τί τὸ πρὸ τῆς
 φθορᾶς ὕψωμα; Τί τὸ μετὰ ταύτην ἄτιμον; Τίς
 130 ἡ πλεονεξία; Ὑπὲρ τίνος αἱ μάχαι; Ἐν τίνι οἱ
 τυρβασμοί; Διὰ τί τὸ σπουδάζον; Ποίῳ λόγῳ
 διχοστασίαι; Ἐν τίνι ἡ ἀρπαγή; Ἐνεκεν τίνος τὰ
 χρήματα; Ποῦ ἡ δόξα; Τί τὸ ὄφελος; Οἱ ὑπηρέται
 κενοί, οὐδεὶς ἀρωγός, οὐδεὶς φύλαξ, οὐδεὶς
 135 συμμαχῆσαι δυνήσεται· ἐκεῖνα πρὸ τοῦ θανάτου,
 ταῦτα μετὰ τὸν θάνατον· εἰ καὶ ἄπρακτα, ἐκεῖνα
 τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ λιχνεύονται ἄνθρωποι· ταῦτα ὁ
 λόγος πονεῖ, ἐκεῖνα φθείρονται· ταῦτα θρῆνον P 116v
 ἐπάγουσιν, ὄντως πάντα τῇ τοῦ χρόνου φθορᾷ
 140 συμφείρονται. Διατοῦτο καὶ γὰρ δεύων ἀνέτω
 καρδίᾳ καὶ ἀγνοῶν τὰ εὐόλισθα τῶν βροτῶν, A 82r
 εἶδον ἄρτι καὶ ἔμαθον ἐξ ὧν ἔπαθον. Καίπερ εἰ
 καὶ πρὸ τοῦ παθεῖν με ἔδει νοεῖν ὧν οὐκ ἤμην
 μὴ παθὼν κύριος, τῇ τῶν ἡδέων δὲ λειότητι
 145 καὶ γλισχρότητι τοὺς ψυχικοὺς καὶ λογικοὺς
 πόρους ἐμφραγεῖς εἰς βάθος, οὐ παρέσχον χώραν
 εἰσελεύσεως τῷ τῆς γνώσεως λεπτομερεῖ· καὶ
 τοῦτο δρῶν ἢ πάσχων αἰεὶ, διέμεινα ἀθεράπευτος.

IV. Πορευόμενος ἐπορευόμην ἐν πλατυσμῷ,
 150 μὴ συνιείς καὶ τὸν ὄλισθον, σπόρον μὲν
 καταβάλλων εἰς γῆν, ἐξ ἧς οὐδέποτε καρπὸς
 ἀνεβλάστησε, ζῶν ζῶν μὴ πρὸς ἀρετὴν καὶ P 117r
 δρόμον τρέχων πολλῷ μήκει τῆς ἀληθινῆς
 ὁδοῦ ἀποδιϊστάμενον. Καὶ γὰρ εἰ καὶ ἐνόμιζον A 82v
 155 ἔχειν τι, οὐδὲν τῶν ὧν εἶχον εἶχε τὸ πρὸς ἐμὲ
 ἔμμονον, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον πόρρω ὑπῆρχον ταῦτα
 τῇ φύσει, εἰ καὶ τῇ θέσει ἐμοὶ κατεμίγνυντο.
 Ἀστασία καὶ γὰρ καιροῦ καὶ παραφθορᾶς
 πραγμάτων ῥοπή καὶ τὸ μηδὲν τῶν ὧν περ
 160 οὐκ ὄντων τοῖς οὐσι σχέσις τὰ ἐμὰ νομιζόμενα

Since mortals who are dying bequeath what they appreciate to people who do not appreciate it, all things are indeed appreciated and none of them has constancy. Alas, what is this then? What is the passage of time? What is the inevitability of fate? What is exaltation before ruin? What is dishonor after ruin? What is greed? On whose behalf are battles fought? In what do troubles lie? Why is there diligence? For what reason are there dissensions? What constitutes a theft? Wherefore is there money? Where is fame? What is its benefit? The servants are empty-handed, nobody is a helper, nobody is a guard, nobody will be able to be an ally. The former things are before death, but the latter are after. Even if the former are unprofitable, people covet them with passion. Reason works on the latter things, the former perish. They bring lamentation; truly everything is utterly destroyed by the corruption of time. Therefore, traveling light-heartedly and being unaware of how easily mortals slip, I saw and learned just now what I suffered from. Even though I should, even before suffering, have understood what I did not control through having no experience of suffering, I blocked fully the entryways of the spirit and reason with the softness and smoothness of pleasure, and allowed no room for receiving the fine details of knowledge. In so doing, or rather suffering at all times, I remained incurable.

IV. “Walking in a broad space,”¹² I was journeying unaware of perdition, planting a seed in the earth from which a fruit never grew, living not a virtuous life and running a course far distant from the true path. For even if I thought I possessed something, nothing I had was permanent for me, but these things were far from me by nature, even though mixed in me by convention.¹³ For the inconstancy of the moment and the corruptive force of circumstances—as well as the fact that the attachment of the nonexistent to the existent amounts to nothing—destroy what is thought to be mine. Alas,

149 Πορευόμενος ἐν πλατυσμῷ Ps. 118:45 | 151–52 οὐδέποτε καρπὸς ἀνεβλάστησε cf. Mk. 4:25 ff.

132 τρόπῳ post ἐν τίνι add. P | 142–43 εἰ καὶ A^{ac}P : καὶ A^{Pc} | 143 με] μὲν P | 149 τμήμα γ' A : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα τέταρτον· δ' P | 151 ἐξ ἧς] ἐξ ἧς P

12 The author uses elsewhere the metaphor of journey “walking in a broad space” (derived from Psalm 118:45) to refer to his easy and carefree life. See *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, *ep.* 36.65–66 at 46; *ep.* 57.10–11 at 85.

13 See Theodore’s treatise *On the Natural Communion* (n. 57 above).

διαλύουσι. Παπαὶ τοῦ δεινοῦ· ὦ τοῦ πολλοῦ
τοῦ πρώην ἀγνώστου μου. Τί τίς διαπράζεται
τέχνης ἐπιληψόμενος, καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀστασίας μέρη
συνενώσας, συμπήξει καὶ δώσει τούτοις μοῖραν
165 ὄντοτης; Καὶ γε καὶ Θεὸς ἄφθαρτα τανῦν
φθαρτὰ κατεσκεύασεν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς κακίας
νοσήσαντα καὶ λύσιν παθόντα τῆς ἀρετῆς, τὰ P 117v
τιμῆς καὶ ἀφθαρσίας σκευὴ πάθος φθορᾶς καὶ
ἀτιμίας ὑφίστανται, τῇ ἐκ θανάτου δηλονότι
170 διαλύσει καθυπαγόμενα. Καὶ γὰρ χλοηφορούσα
ἡ τῶν κοσμικῶν πραγμάτων πολιτεία ἔλκει τὸ
τῆς ψυχῆς ἄλογον εἰς ἀκρασίαν μὲν ἡδονῆς,
παντελεῖ δὲ ταύτης ἀπώλειαν. Δίκην γὰρ ἵππου A 83r
καὶ ἡμιόνου ὀρμησάσῃ τῇ ἀνθρωπείᾳ φύσει πρὸς
175 τὴν ἡδονὴν κατὰ σχέσιν, οὐκ ἔστι ταύτῃ πρὸς
τὴν ἀρετὴν δηλαδὴ σύνεσις, ἐπεὶ κημὸν λόγου
καὶ χαλινὸν τεμουσα πρότερον τῇ παρακοῇ,
κατὰ κρημνῶν ὠθεῖται μὴ αἰσθανομένη τοῦ
πτώματος. Οὕτω φύσις παθαίνεται, οὕτως οἱ
180 ἐκ τῆς φύσεως ἔπονται, οὕτω τυφλώττομαι ὡς
ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως καὶ γὰρ τῷ νοῦ, οὕτω χρόνος
παρέρχεται, οὕτω μεταπίπτει τὰ πράγματα,
οὕτω χώραν ἔχει τὰ τῆς κακίας, οὕτω τὰ ὄντα P 118r
νομιζόμενα οὐδεμίαν τοῖς οὖσιν ὄντως ἔχει
185 συγγένειαν, οὕτω φθοραὶ παμπληθεῖς, οὕτω τὰ
τῶν ἀστάτων παρέρχονται τῇ τοῦ χρόνου ῥοπῇ.
Διὸ καὶ παθῶν τίς καὶ σωφρονισθείς, τὴν τοῦ
χρόνου ὑπερακοντίζει φορὰν καὶ φθοράν· ὅς
δ' αὖ ἀμελεῖ, στρέφεται τῷ τροχῷ μηδὲν ἔχων
190 τὸ στάσιμον, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ τῶν βροτῶν ἅπαντα
μειώσκει μᾶλλον ἢ ὄντοτι ἐπονται.

V. Ἡ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπόληψις μᾶλλον βλέπει ἐν A 83v
οἷς οὐ δεῖ βλέπειν τὸν ἀνθρωπον, καὶ οἷσπερ
ἐπεντρυφᾷν ἔδει μᾶλλον αὐτήν, ἀνιάρως
195 διάκειται· τὸ γὰρ γεῶδες μέρος ταύτην βαρύνον,
ἄγει πρὸς τὴν συγγένειαν. Τούτου δὲ γεγονότος,
ὁ ἔφορος κατενήγκεται καὶ κυλινδοῦται φθορᾷ P 118v
τὴν ὕλην ἔχων ἐντρύφημα. Διατοῦτο καὶ τὰ
μέρη τοῦ πνεύματος, τῷ αὐτοκράτορι ἐπόμενα
200 ὄντα, φθείρονται ἀκρατῶς, μηδὲν εἰς ἀρετὴν

what a terrible situation! A situation quite unfamiliar to me earlier! Who will achieve anything by applying his craft and, after piecing together the parts of inconstancy, will impart stability and a share of existence to them? God indeed created incorruptible what is now corruptible, but the vessels of honor and incorruptibility, infected with evil¹⁴ and subjected to separation from virtue, undergo the suffering of decay and dishonor, that is, they vanish through dissolution caused by death. For the blooming life of worldly affairs drags the unreasoning part of the soul to the intemperance of pleasure and a total perdition of the soul. For when human nature is impelled by habit toward pleasure in the manner of a horse and a mule, it has clearly no comprehension of virtue, because once having broken the bridle and bit of reason through earlier disobedience, it is pushed over the cliff, not conscious of its fall. Thus nature suffers, thus people follow suit on account of nature, thus I too am blinded in my mind as though by nature itself, thus time goes by, thus affairs change, thus evil gains ground, thus things considered to exist have truly no kinship with things that exist, thus instances of passing away become abundant, thus inconstant things disappear under the force of time. Therefore the person who has suffered and has been chastened moves beyond the flow and corruption of time and passing away. But the careless person revolves on the wheel without any stability because everything mortal follows diminution rather than being.

V. The opinion of the crowd prefers to look at what humankind should not look at and abhors what it should rather enjoy. For the earthly component that weighs down heavily on the crowd's opinion leads it to its kin. When this occurs, the observer is lulled and wallows in corruption, taking pleasure in matter. And so the parts of the spirit that are following their sovereign perish powerlessly, as they fail to rush toward the virtue of the good.

167–68 τὰ τῆς τιμῆς καὶ ἀφθαρσίας σκευὴ cf. Rom. 9:21 |
173–74 ἵππου καὶ ἡμιόνου cf. Ps. 31:9

165 τὰ νῦν A | 166 φθαρτὰ] ἄφθαρτα P | 168 τῆς ante
τιμῆς add. P | 170 καθυπαγόμενα] καθ' ὑπαγόμενα P |
173 δὲ P | 184 οὐδεμίαν] οὐδὲ μίαν P | 192 τμήμα δ' A
: τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα πέμπτον P

14 "Infection with evil" refers to the Fall.

ὁρμὴν ποιοῦντα καλῶν. Τί γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον
 ζυγοστατήσῃ τις πρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν; Πάντως
 οὐδέν, ὅτι οὐδὲ ὃν τί, οὐπὲρ αὐτὴ μὴ νομοθετεῖ
 τὴν ὄντοτητα, καὶ ὃ μὴ διὰ ταύτης βασιλεύει,
 205 εἰ καὶ ὧν οὐ δεῖ ἄρχειν, τυχικῶς ὑπερκάθηται
 ὡς εἰκῇ. Τὸ γὰρ ἐξ αὐτῆς τιμᾶσθαι τῷ τιμᾶν A 84r
 τῆς τιμῆς τὰ μέρη εὐμοιρεῖν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ
 Θεοῦ εὐεργέτημα. Δεῖ γοῦν ἅπαντας διαταῦτα
 ἀσπάζεσθαι ἀρετὴν. Τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα πάντα τί
 210 εἰσι; Πρόσκαιρος ἡδονή, χαύνωσις λογισμοῦ,
 ψυχῆς θηλότης, νοδὸς παρατροπή, κακίας
 παρὰ θηξίς, πόνου πρόσκλησις, λύπη συνεχής, P 119r
 θρήνος περὶ τὰ τέλη, στεναγμοὶ τῶν οἰκείων,
 εἰ καὶ μὴ πρὸς ὠφέλειαν, πολλῶν καρδιῶν
 215 διαλογισμοί, ἀνθρακες κατὰ τὸ τῆς ἡχοῦς
 φλογίζοντες ὑστερόφωνον, μετὰ μελὸς ἄκαιρος,
 κηρύκευμα συμφορᾶς. Λύπης ἱστορία τοῖς
 λέγουσι μὲν δεινόν, τοῖς ἀκρωμένοις δὲ πάμπαν
 δύσφημον. Πάντα θρήνος, πάντα μέλος σὺν
 220 οὐαὶ ἐξηχούμενα. Ταῦτα καὶ Ἰερεμίας ἐθρήνησε
 καὶ Ἰησοῦς ἐδάκρυσε προσευχόμενος, ἐν οἷς οὐκ
 ἔστι τί τούτων ἕτερον, ἢ τὸ διὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην
 φύσιν τὴν γε ὀλισθηράν. Ταῦτα τοίνυν καὶ
 225 τὰ τοιαῦτα κάμει σήμερον ὀλοσχερῶς πείθει A 84v
 θρηνεῖν, παθόντα τό, ὃ καὶ νοῦς οὐκ ἐνόησε καὶ
 ὄρασις οὐκ ἤλπισεν ἰδεῖν καὶ τύχη αὐτομάτως
 ἐπέστησε. Διατοῦτο θρηνῶν ὀδύρομαι νῦν τε
 καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων θρήνων P 119v
 καθεστήκασιν ἄξια, ὡς ἄστατα καὶ ἀνύπαρκτα
 230 καὶ ἀσυντελῆ καὶ μηδὲν ἔχοντα τὸ λύπης
 μηδόλως ἀψάμενον, ἀλλὰ πάντα φθορᾶς καὶ
 πρὸς τὸ τῆς σφενδόνης ὁρμώντα ἀκόντισμα.

VI. Βασιλικὴν τινὲς ποτε δόξαν ἐθαύμασαν
 καὶ πλούτων ἕτεροι ἐπεθύμησαν καὶ τρυφῆς
 235 ἡδονῶν· οἱ πλείους μᾶλλον τῶν ἀπάντων, οἱ

For what earthly thing will anyone measure in the
 balance with virtue? Nothing at all, since there is
 not anything whose being virtue does not ordain
 and because the thing reigning not through vir-
 tue, if it governs over matters it should not govern,
 presides by accident without a sense of purpose. To
 be honored on account of virtue with the happy
 lot of honoring the parts of honor is nothing but a
 benefaction of God. For this reason everyone ought
 to embrace virtue. For what is everything else?
 Temporary pleasure, weakness of reason, effemi-
 nacy of the soul, aberration of the intellect, instiga-
 tion of evil, invitation of pain, continuous sorrow,
 lamentation about the final moments, groans of the
 companions, even if these are to no avail, thoughts
 of many hearts, coals glowing like an echo's dimin-
 ishing sound, ill-timed repentance, message of mis-
 fortune. The story of sorrow is terrible for those
 who tell it and is totally unspeakable for those who
 hear it. Everything is lament, everything is melody
 resounding with ululation. Jeremiah lamented¹⁵
 and Jesus wept¹⁶ and prayed for things that with-
 out exception are caused by erring human nature.
 These and similar matters utterly persuade me also
 to weep today, for I suffered something that my
 mind did not grasp, my vision did not expect to see,
 and fortune acting on her own brought along. So
 I mourn and weep in my mind and soul, because
 human affairs have come to be worthy of lamenta-
 tion as inconstant, nonexistent, useless, and having
 nothing that is unrelated to sorrow, while every-
 thing is corrupted and rushes toward the missile of
 the catapult.¹⁷

VI. Some people previously admired imperial glory
 and others yearned for riches and the pleasures of
 luxury, but most people yearn for everything—some

214–15 καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί Mat. 15:19; Mk. 7:21; Lk. 2:35,
 9:47, 24:38 | 215–16 τὸ τῆς ἡχοῦς... ὑστερόφωνον cf. Greg.
 Naz., Or. 43 *Funebris oratio in laudem Basilii Magni* 77
 in PG 36:600A | 221 Ἰησοῦς ἐδάκρυσε Joh. 11:35

227 τὲ P | 228 τῇ P om. | 231 ἀψάμενον P |
 233 τμήμα ε' A : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα ἔκτον P | 234 πλούτων
 A^{pc} P : πλούτων A^c

15 Five songs of lamentation are attributed to Jeremiah in the
 Old Testament.

16 The expression is used for Christ crying at Lazarus's tomb
 (John 11:35).

17 The author uses a similar military metaphor in the seventh
 oration of his *On the Christian Theology*. See Θεοδώρου Β' (n.
 59 above), ed. Krikonis, 147:327–328: καθάπερ ἀκροβολισμὸς
 ἐκ σφενδόνης. Apart from a hand sling, the *sphendone* in
 Byzantium could mean a catapult used in siege warfare. See D. F.
 Sullivan, *Siegecraft: Two Tenth-Century Instructional Manuals*
by Heron of Byzantium (Washington, DC, 2000), 90 (44.39).

μέν τοῦ τῆς δόξης ὑψηλοῦ, οἱ δὲ τῶν χρημάτων
 τῆς τέρψεως, οἱ δὲ τῆς τρυφῆς τοῦ λείου τε καὶ
 ἀλύπου. Ἐγὼ θαυμάζω τὴν δόξαν τῶν πολλῶν A 85r
 καὶ τὸ ἐν τίνι λόγῳ τὰ μηδεὶς μετέχοντα
 240 θαύματος τεθαυμάκασιν. Διὸ θαυμάζων τὰ
 ἅπερ οὐ δεῖ θαυμάζειν τοὺς θαυμαστάς,
 τεθαύμακα τὰ τῆς φύσεως. Θαυμάζων δὲ
 τὰ τῆς φύσεως, ἐξετάζω αὐτά, ἐν οἷσπερ P 120r
 οὐδὲν εὖρον ἄξιον θαύματος, ἐπεὶ καὶ φθορᾷ
 245 ὑπόκεινται. Χρόνῳ καὶ γὰρ ἀλλοιοῦνται καὶ
 τρόποις δυσπραγημάτων ἀλλάττονται, καὶ
 οὐδὲν πόρρω μὴ ὄντος εἰσίν· ὅθεν τεθαύμακα
 τὴν φθορὰν ὡς λύουσιν τὸν ψυχικὸν δεσμὸν
 καὶ σωματικόν. Τεθαύμακα τὴν ἀπλησίαν,
 250 ἐξ ἧς γεννῶνται τὰ εἰς ἀρετὴν ἀποπτώματα.
 Τεθαύμακα τὴν τοῦ βίου ἀπάτην, δι' ἧς οἱ εἶναι
 κτισθέντες ὡς μὴ ὄντες εἰσὶ καὶ διατοῦτο ὄντες
 οὐκ εἰσὶ. Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα τεθαύμακα, οὐχ' ὡς τῇ
 τιμῇ θαυμαστά, ἀλλ' ὡς καινὰ τινα καὶ τέρατα
 255 καὶ πόρρω ὄντα τοῦ δέοντος. Διατοῦτο γοῦν
 πᾶσαν ψυχὴν δεῖ θαυμάζειν τὸ ἄστατον τῶν
 ἀνθρωπίνων πραγματειῶν, ἵνα θαυμάζουσα
 τὴν αὐτῶν ἀστασίαν τύχῃ τοῦ στασίμου τῆς A 85v
 ἀρετῆς. Ἐπεὶ καὶ κατὰ τὸ συμφέρον οἱ πλείους P 120v
 260 ἀρεταίνεσθαι βούλονται (τὸ γὰρ διὰ τὸ φύσει καλὸν
 οὐδὲν ἄλλου ἔργον ἐστίν, ἢ τοῦ ὁμοιωμένου
 Θεῷ), διατοῦτο καὶ οἱ τὴν τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν
 εἰσηγησάμενοι θαυμάζουσι τὸν καιρὸν καὶ τὰς
 χρονικὰς παραφθοράς τε καὶ ἀλλοιώσεις, μηδὲν
 265 τούτων νομογραφοῦντες ἔχειν τὸ στάσιμον,
 ὅτι καὶ ψυχῆς φιλοσόφου θεσπίσματα τὸ
 ἀπαρέγκλιτον ἔχουσι. Ταῦτο δὲ καὶ περὶ τὰ τῆς

for the heights of glory, others for the joy of money,
 and yet others for the easy and untroubled life of
 luxury. I am amazed at the opinions of the crowd
 and at the reasons why it has come to admire what
 has no share in anything admirable. Amazed there-
 fore at what admirers should not admire, I have
 come to marvel at nature's creation. As I marvel at
 nature's creation, I examine things in which I find
 nothing worthy of admiration because they are also
 subject to passing away. For they are altered over
 time and changed by way of misfortunes and are
 not far distant from the nonexistent. Hence I have
 come to wonder at passing away as it dissolves the
 bond between soul and body. I have come to won-
 der at insatiable greed that gives rise to lapses from
 virtue. I have come to wonder at life's deception,
 through which people created to exist are as though
 nonexistent and therefore do not exist. I have come
 to wonder at all these things not because they are
 admirable in value, but as something novel, extraor-
 dinary, and far from necessary. Every soul must
 therefore be amazed at the inconstancy of human
 affairs, so that by being amazed at their inconstancy
 it may attain the constancy of virtue. Because most
 people wish to be virtuous for their own benefit
 (for the good by nature is achieved solely by a man
 assimilated to God), for this reason also those
 who explain the knowledge of the existent marvel
 at time as well as at the corruptions and changes
 caused by time, laying it down as a law that none of
 them has constancy, and that the decisions of a phil-
 osophical soul are steadfast.¹⁸ They laid down much

236 τοῦ τῆς δόξης ὑψηλοῦ A^{PCP} : τὸ τῆς δόξης ὑψηλόν
 A^{ac} | 237 τῆς τέρψεως A^{PCP} : τὴν τέρψιν A^{ac} | 237–
 38 τοῦ λείου τε καὶ ἀλύπου A^{PCP} : τὸ λείον καὶ ἄλυπον A^{ac}
 | 240 θαύματος A^{PCP} | 242–43 θαυμάζων δὲ τὰ τῆς
 φύσεως P om. | 243 ἐξετάζων P | 244 θαύματος A^{PCP}
 | 267 ταυτὸ AP

18 The juxtaposition of “the good by nature” vs. “ben-
 efit” recurs in Theodore’s treatise on political friendship.
 Following Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, Theodore classi-
 fies friendship into three categories: friendship for the sake
 of pleasure, for the sake of benefit, and for the sake of the
 “good by nature.” See Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetor-
 ica*, ed. Tartaglia, 124.88–90. “People who explain the knowl-
 edge of beings” (γνώσις τῶν ὄντων) refers to the philosophers.
 “Knowledge of beings qua beings” (γνώσις τῶν ὄντων ἢ ὄντα)
 is one of the six definitions of philosophy reported in the late
 antique *prolegomena philosophiae*. The sixth-century philoso-
 pher David derives the definition from Pythagoras. See David,
Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen commentarium, ed. A.
 Busse, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* 17.2 (Berlin, 1900),
 26.9–13; J. Duffy, “Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the
 Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos,” in *Byzantine Philosophy and
 Its Ancient Sources*, ed. K. Ierodiakonou (Oxford, 2002), 139–
 56. In his *Satire of the Tutor* (*Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia,

τύχης οὗτοι πλησμίως ἐνομογράφησαν, τῇ τοῦ
 χρόνου στροφῇ ταύτην ἐξομοιώσαντες· ἐν ᾧ καὶ
 270 οὐδόλως διήμαρτον τοῦ σκοποῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν τὸ
 παράδειγμα τῷ πρωτοτύπῳ ἀληθῶς ἐξεικόνισαν.
 Διατοῦτο γοῦν οὐδὲν τύχης καθέστηκεν
 ἀστατώτερον καὶ χρόνου εὐμεταβλητότερον
 καὶ βροτῶν ὀλισθηρότερον φύσεως. Διὸ καὶ P 121r
 275 φθειρομένων αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ἀπατηλῇ σχέσει
 αὐτῶν, οἱ βροτοὶ πρὸς ἀρετὴν διαφθείρονται. A 86r

VII. Δεῖ μνημονεῦειν αἰεὶ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων
 φορᾶς καὶ τῆς τῶν χρόνων μεταβολῆς καὶ τοῦ
 τῆς βιωτικῆς ἀστασίας στασίμου. Διότι εἴπερ
 280 μνείαν τούτων ἔχομεν ὡς νοήμονες, οὐδέποτ'
 ἂν ἄλγος ἐνθείημεν τῇ ψυχῇ, ὡς ἐνιαίως
 φρονούντες καὶ ἀληθῶς καὶ τὴν ψευδόμορφον
 ἀπάτην γνωρίζοντες τε καὶ ἀποφεύγοντες. Καὶ
 γὰρ ποικίλλεται ἡ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων
 285 φύσις διαφόροις χρωματουργίαις, ἐν αἷσπερ καὶ
 τὰ τῆς λύμης ἡδέα εἰσὶ, μέλι μέν, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ἐν τῷ
 φάρυγγι ῥέοντα, καχεξίαν δ' ὅμως προξενούντα
 ἄστεκτον τῇ ψυχῇ, διότι καὶ ὧν μὴ ἔχει καὶ
 ὧν ἔχει στέρησιν ἐν τούτῳ κερδανεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ P 121v
 290 χαρᾶς ἡδονήν. Τὸ γὰρ ἀκρατῶς τοῖς μηδὲν οὖσιν
 ἐνορᾶν λύμην φέρει, ἡ δὲ λύμη παραφθοράν, A 86v
 αὕτη δὲ ὀλεθρον. Ὅλεθρου δὲ τί ἂν γένοιτο
 δυσπραγέστερον; Καὶ γὰρ μὴ ὄντος μὴ ὄν εἶναι
 ἀνυπαρκτότερον ὅλως ἀδύνατον, εἴπερ ἄμφω τῇ
 295 φύσει μὴ ὄντα εἰσὶ. Διατοῦτο γοῦν δεῖ μνήμην
 ἔχειν τῶν ὄντων ἢ τῶν οὐκ ὄντων. Καὶ πάλιν
 ἐρῶ· διατοῦτο δεῖ νοεῖν ἅπαντας πάντα εἶναι
 μηδέν, ἐπεὶ καὶ μηδὲν ἔχει ὄντως τὸ στάσιμον,
 διότι ἡ χρόνος ἢ τύχη ἢ ῥοπή πραγμάτων ἢ ὥρας
 300 μεταβολῇ ἢ φθορᾶς ἐπελεύσει, ἢ ἑτέρῳ τρόπῳ
 τινί, πάντα τὰ μέρη τῶν πάντων ἀλλάττονται ἐκ
 νομιζομένου ὄντος εἰς μὴ ὄν ἐναργές. Διατοῦτο,
 ὦ πάντες ἀνθρώποι, τοὺς ψυχικοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς,
 ὡς εἰπεῖν, ἀφαρπάσαντες τῆς τῶν νομιζομένων P 122r
 305 εἶναι σχέσεως, εἰς τὸ ὄν ἀτενίσωμεν, ὅτι οὐκ
 ἔστιν οὐδὲν ὃ μὴ, εἰ οὐκ ἐν ἐκείνῳ ὄρᾳ, τοῦ μὴ
 ὄντος ἐστίν. Ὁ γὰρ ἦν ἕκαστον, τοῖς ὁμοίοις

286–87 μέλι μέν, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ἐν τῷ φάρυγγι ῥέοντα cf.
 Ecclesiasticus 49:1.3

273 ἀστατότερον P | 277 τμήμας' A : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα
 ἐβδόμον.' P | 278 μεταβολῆς P | 284 γὰρ om. P |
 285 αἷσπερ] αἷς P | 287 φάριγγι P | 290 τὸ γὰρ] τὸ γὰρ
 τὸ γὰρ P | 295 διὰ τοῦτο P

the same also about the acts of fortune, comparing
 it to the passage of time. In this they did not miss
 the mark, but rendered the copy most truthfully
 after its prototype. Therefore there is nothing more
 unstable than fortune, more changeable than time,
 and more able to err than the nature of mortals. So
 whilst being corrupted in their deceptive relation-
 ship among themselves, mortals are corrupted with
 regard to virtue.

VII. One must always remember the sweep of cir-
 cumstances, the change of times, and the constancy
 of life's inconstancy. For if we keep these things in
 mind as intelligent creatures, we would never cause
 pain to the soul as we would think uniformly and
 truthfully, and we would both recognize and shun
 deception under its fallacious shape. For the nature
 of human affairs is colored with different dyes, in
 which harmful things are also sweet (a honey, so to
 speak, flowing into the throat), yet they cause the
 soul unbearable affliction, because in this the soul
 will acquire a deprivation of both what it lacks and
 what it has rather than acquiring the delight of joy.
 For looking intemperately at the nonexistent brings
 harm; harm brings corruption, which in turn leads
 to perdition. But what is more unfortunate than
 perdition? For it is fully impossible for nonbeing to
 be more nonexistent than nonbeing, since both are
 nonexistent by nature. Therefore one should keep
 in mind the existent rather than the nonexistent. I
 shall say it again: everyone must consider all things
 to be nothing on the grounds that nothing truly
 has constancy, because through time, fortune, the
 force of circumstances, the change of the season,
 the advent of decay, or some other way all parts of
 everything are transformed from what is suppos-
 edly existing to what clearly does not exist. For this
 reason, oh, humankind, we should turn our gaze
 to the existent by dragging away our spiritual eyes,
 so to speak, from attachment to things believed to
 be, because there is not anything that is not part of
 nonbeing, should it not be gazing inside the exist-
 ent. For each thing that was is united with simi-
 lar things, and the thing that assumes being in its

173.463–181.657), Theodore mentions all six late antique defini-
 tions of philosophy.

ξυνάγεται, καὶ ὁ μέρεσι λαμβάνει τὸ εἶναι,
 ἔστι μὴ ὄν. Χρόνος δέ γε καὶ χλιδὴ καὶ βίοι καὶ
 310 πλοῦτος καὶ δόξα καὶ ὑπηρεσία καὶ τέκνα καὶ
 γονεῖς καὶ σὰρξ καὶ νεῦρα καὶ ὅστ' αὖ καὶ χυμοὶ A 87r
 καὶ πάντα τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φθείρονται, μὴδὲν
 ἔχοντα στάσιμον ὡς ὕλης μέρη καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς.

VIII. Τὸ πηχθὲν ἀναγκαίως ἀλλοιοῦται ἐν
 315 καιροῖς καὶ χρονικαῖς ὁρμαῖς καὶ ῥοπαῖς· τὸ
 ἀλλοιωθὲν μεταβάλλεται ἐκ τοῦ ὃ ἦν εἰς τὸ ὃ
 οὐκ ἦν· τὸ μεταβαλλόμενον ἐκ τοῦ ὃ ἦν εἰς τὸ ὃ
 οὐκ ἦν μειώσεσι μεταβάλλεται· τὸ μειούμενον
 ἐγγίζει πρὸς τὴν φθοράν· τὸ φθορᾶ ὑπόδικον P 122v
 320 ἔστιν ὄντως μὴ ὄν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλως ἔχει φύσει
 γενέσθαι, ἢ τὸ πηχθὲν λυθῆναι, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐξ οὐκ
 ὄντος παρήχθη. Τὸ γὰρ εἶναι τε καὶ μὴ εἶναι
 τῆς ὀντότητος καὶ μὴ ὀντότητος σημαίνουσι
 τὰς φωνάς, ὃ δὲ ὄν καὶ μὴ ὄν ὀνομάζουσι. Καὶ
 325 πηχθὲν καὶ ἀλλοιωθὲν οὐκ ἔστιν ὄντως καὶ ὄν.
 Τὸ γὰρ πηχθὲν καὶ ἀλλοιωθὲν, τὸ μὲν ἐξ οὐκ A 87v
 ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ νομιζομένου
 ὄντος εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι, δηλοῦσι τὴν ἀστασίαν
 τὴν καὶ τὴν δόκησιν. Διατοῦτο πάντα τὰ ἐν
 330 γενέσει τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων μὴ ὄντα
 εἰσὶν, ἄτερ μόνης ψυχῆς. Τιμαὶ δὲ καὶ δοξασμοὶ
 καὶ τρυφαὶ καὶ πάντα ὅσα βροτῶν φύσις φέρει
 δι' ἔρωτος οὐδὲν εἰσὶν ἀληθῶς. Διατοῦτο πᾶν
 μὴ ὄν εἰκονίζει τὴν τοῦ χρόνου ῥοπὴν καὶ τὰς
 335 τοῦ ἀέρος τροπὰς. Καὶ γὰρ ὁμβρῶν ρεύματα P 123r
 ἐν καιρῷ καὶ χιόνος ἐπέλευσις καὶ παρουσία
 χαλάζης καὶ ἀνέμων φοραὶ καὶ κρύους πῆξεις
 καὶ αὐχοὶ ἐξ ἡλιακῆς πυρᾶς καὶ ἀστέρων
 συνόδου καὶ ξηρασίαι τῇ λείψει τοῦ ὑγραίνοντος
 340 καὶ ἀναθυμιάσεις ἀναδιδόμεναι καὶ ἕτερα
 μυρία τὸ τοῦ ἀέρος λεπτότατον μεταβάλλουσι,
 μὴδὲν ἄμεινον τύχης διακείμενα καὶ τοῖς αὐτῆς

parts is nonbeing.¹⁹ Time, luxury, livelihoods, wealth, glory, servants, children, parents, flesh, sinews, bones, humors, and all that is of the flesh are destroyed, having nothing constant, as they are parts of matter and corruption.

VIII. By necessity the compacted thing alters with the seasons and through the impulses and forces of time. The altered thing is transformed from what it was into what it was not. What is transformed from what it was into what it was not is transformed by diminution. What has been diminished comes close to corruption.²⁰ The thing subject to corruption is truly nonexistent. For coming-to-be cannot happen naturally except when a compacted thing is dissolved, because the latter was produced from something which was not. For “to be” and “not to be” signify the terms of being and nonbeing, something which they call “existence” and “nonexistence.” The thing both compacted and changed is not truly existent. For the thing compacted and changed (the former from nonexistence into being and the latter from what was considered existent into nonbeing) reveals inconstancy and false appearance. Therefore everything in the coming-to-be of things human is nonexistent except for the soul alone. Honors, glorifications, luxuries, and everything that the nature of mortals produces through desire are truly nothing. For this reason everything nonexistent reflects the force of time and the changes in the atmosphere. For seasonal precipitation, snowfall, the appearance of hail, blasts of wind, freezing frost, droughts caused by the sun’s fire and by the conjunction of the stars, dry spells as a result of the absence of moisture, rising exhalations and a myriad of other things that are no better than fortune and resemble its calamities transform the fine nature of

314 τμήμα ζ' Α : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα ὄγδοον P | 321 ἐπεὶ καὶ] ἐπεὶ P | 337 φοραὶ] φθοραὶ P πῆξεις AP^cP : πῆξεις A^{ac} | 339 συνόδου] συνόδους P | 342 μὴδὲν] μὴ μὴδὲν P ἐξ ante αὐτῆς add. P

19 On the idea of “growth by parts,” see Aristotle, *On Coming-to-Be and Passing away* (*De generatione et corruptione*), 321b10–322a4. On “change in parts,” see also Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Epitome of Physics*, ch. 6, PG 142:1080A.

20 “Alteration,” “diminution,” and “destruction” are three of the six types of motion described in Aristotle, *Categories*, 15a13–33. See also Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Epitome of Logic*, ch. 21, in PG 142:840BC. Theodore Laskaris lists the six types of motion in his *On the Heavens*. See N. Festa, “Κοσμικὴ Δῆλωση,” *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 12 (1899): 15.6–8.

ἐξομοιούμενα δυσπραγίμασιν. Ὡς τοῦ μὴ ὄντος
τῆς ἀστασίας. Εὖ δέ γε τοῦ ὄντος τῆς στάσεως.
345 Οὐποτ' ἂν κυριεύσῃ τὸ μὴ ὄν τῆς ὀντότητος, A 88r
ἀλλ' ἀχθήσεται πειθαρχοῦν, ἐπεὶ καὶ δούλόν
ἐστὶ. Διατοῦτο οὐ δεῖ εἶναι δούλους ἡμᾶς τῶν
ὁμοδούλων, χρόνου λέγω καὶ τῆς ζωικῆς ἡδονῆς,
ὡς μὴ ὄντων καὶ ὁμοδούλων. Ἀρετὴν οὖν ἑαυτοῖς
350 ἄρμοστέον, ἵνα ἄρμοσθῶμεν δι' αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸ P 123v
ὄν.

IX. Χρονικὴν ἀλλοίωσιν καὶ βίου ἐναλλαγὴν
καὶ νοημάτων μετάρθεσιν δεῖ θαυμάζειν τοὺς
νοήμονας, οὐχ' ὡς παραδόξους ταύτας καὶ
355 καινοπρεπεῖς πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ὡς θαυμαστάς
κατὰ τὸν τρόπον τούτων καὶ τὴν ὁρμήν, διὰ τὸ
ἔχειν τὸ αὐτοκίνητον ἐπὶ χεῖρονι καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἐκ
τῶν τοιούτων πρὸς τὸ στάσιμον ῥέπειν. Ὅθεν A 88v
μᾶλα τοῦτό ἐστι θαυμαστόν, τὸ τὰ μὴ θαυμαστὰ
360 θαυμάζειν τοὺς θαυμαστάς· διὸ καὶ θαύματος
ταῦτα ὄντα ἄξια ὡς τερατώδη θεάματα παρὰ
πᾶσι θαυμάζονται, καὶ γὰρ ὄντως περισύρουσι
τὴν διάνοιαν τῷ παραδόξῳ αὐτῶν. Λίθου γὰρ
στιλπνότης περισύρει τὴν αἴσθησιν, ὅτι λαμπρά,
365 ὅτι τιμαλφής, καὶ ὡς ἐν καθελκύσει τὰ ἐξ ὧν P 124r
εὐμοιρεῖ τιμῆς ἔλκει πρὸς τὸν ταύτην κατέχοντα.
Κατὰ ταῦτό γοῦν καὶ χρόνου ἀλλοίωσις καὶ βίου
ἐναλλαγὴ καὶ νοημάτων μετάρθεσις ἀναγκαίως
πειθοῦσι τῇ τούτων μεταβολῇ θαυμάζεσθαι, κἂν
370 τούτοις τὸ σταθιρὸν τῆς τῶν βροτῶν διανοίας
παρασαλεύεται. Ὡς τῆς μεταβολῆς· ὡς τῆς τροπῆς·
ὡς τῆς μεταθέσεως. Ταῦτα πάντα πρὸς μείωσιν
ἐξορμᾷ, τὸ μειούμενον πρὸς ἀφανισμόν τε καὶ
ζόφωσιν. Ζοφώδους δὲ πράγματος τί χεῖρον;
375 Ἐντεῦθεν ζοφοῦται ψυχὴ, εἰ καὶ φωτειδὴς
τῇ φύσει ἐστί. Τὸ γὰρ συγγενὲς χαίρει τοῖς
συγγενέσι, τὸ δὲ ἀξύμβλητον καὶ ἀνόμοιον φέρει
στάσιν. Οὕτως ἅπαντα φθείρονται, οὕτω πάντα P 124v
κατόπιν τοῦ χρόνου τρέχουσι, οὕτω πάντα A 89r
380 τὰ τῶν βροτῶν ἀστάτως ῥέουσι. Διατοῦτο
πᾶσα ψυχὴ εὐγενὴς ἐμμένει τοῖς νοεροῖς ἢ τοῖς
φθαρτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ αἵματι ζυγοστατεῖται εὐγένεια,

346–47 δούλόν ἐστί P | 347 διὰ τοῦτο P | 350 ἄρμοστέον
P ἄρμοσθῶμεν P | 352 τμήμα ἡ' A : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα
ἐνατον· θ' P | 360 θαύματος A^{PC}P | 363 παραδόξῳ
A^{PC}P | 366 ἀμοιρεῖ A ἔλκειν P | 367 κατὰ ταῦτο A :
καταταῦτο P | 369–71 κἂν τούτοις . . . παρασαλεύεται
A^{AC}P : κἂν τούτοις . . . παρασαλεύεται A^{PC}

the air. Oh, the inconstancy of nonexistence! Praise
be to the constancy of existence! Nonexistence shall
never dominate being, but will be led into obedi-
ence because it is its slave. Therefore we must not be
slaves of our fellow-slaves, I mean, slaves of time and
life's pleasures since they are nonexistent and our
fellow-slaves. We ought to fit ourselves to virtue, so
that through virtue we may be joined to existence.

IX. Intelligent people should be amazed at the
alterations of time, the changes in life, and the
transformation of thoughts not as things unex-
pected and novel with respect to the good, but as
things amazing in their own right and impulse,
because they have a self-drive toward the worse and
none of them is directed toward stability. Hence
it is highly astonishing when admirers are admir-
ing what should not be admired. Therefore those
things that are worthy of amazement are admired
among all people as extraordinary spectacles, for
they indeed distract the mind with their unex-
pected character. For the glitter of a precious stone
distracts the senses because it is shiny and valuable,
and as on a scale²¹ draws toward its possessor the
abundant value it has. In the same manner the
alterations of time, the changes in life, and the
transformation of thoughts necessarily provoke
wonder through their shifts. Meanwhile the steady-
ness of mortal minds is shaken. Oh, change! Oh,
turnaround! Oh, transformation! Everything races
toward diminution, and the diminished thing races
toward disappearance and darkness. What is worse
than a dark thing? Hence the soul is darkened even
if it is bright by nature. For kin takes delight in
kin, but what is incompatible and dissimilar brings
about discord. Thus everything passes away, thus
everything runs after time, thus all the affairs of
mortals flow inconstantly. Therefore every noble
soul keeps to intellectual rather than corruptible
things. For nobility is measured not by blood, but

21 The only other occurrence of the noun κατέλκυσις trace-
able through the *TLG* is in the scholia on Aeschylus's *Persians*
437, where ῥοπή is glossed as ἐν βάρει, ἐν κατελκύσει.

- ἀλλ' ἀρετῆς τρόπῳ καὶ ἀπλότῃ διατριβῇ καὶ
καθάρσει πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ὄντος κατάληψιν καὶ
385 ἀνάκρασιν. Οὕτω τιμᾶται, οὕτω καὶ παγιοῦται,
καὶ τῆς χρονικῆς καὶ βιωτικῆς καὶ κοσμικῆς
ἀφαρπάξει παραφθορᾶς ἐαυτήν, καὶ στάσεως
τυγχάνει τῆς κρείττονος, καὶ τρυφᾷ νοερῶς ἐς
ἀεὶ τὰ θεῖα νοήματα κατοπτεύουσα.
- 390 X. Τί τοῦτο; Χρόνος παρέρχεται, βίοι
φθείρονται, φύλον ἀνθρώπων συμπίπτει ῥοῇ. A 89v
Τῶν οὐκ ὄντων φανέρωσις ἐν τῷ φθίρεισθαι
τὰ νομιζόμενα ὄντα, καθὰ καὶ φωτὸς στέρησις P 125r
τὸ μέλαν δεικνύει. Τῶν ὄντων ἀποδιάστασις,
395 τοῦτο δ' αὖ ἀπόπτωμα ψυχῆς μὴ φῶς ἐχούσης
θεῖον, τῶν τοῦ βίου φθορά (ἐπεὶ καὶ φύσει φθορᾶς
καὶ οὐκ ἀφθαρσίας εἰσί), καὶ πάντων τῶν μὴ
νοερῶν ἐς τὸ τέλος ἐκτροπή. Τὸ στάσιμον γὰρ
οὐκ ἄλλου ἐστίν, ἢ μόνου τοῦ ὁρώντος Θεοῦ. Διὸ
400 κρεῖσσον συμφατριάζειν τῶν οὐκ ὄντων καὶ τοῖς
στασίμοις ἀποδιίστασθαι. Τοῖς μὲν καὶ γὰρ ὡς
μηδέν, οἷς δὲ οὐσι νομίζουσιν εἶναι καὶ ἀγαθοῖς,
μὴ οὐσι δ' αὖ ἀγαθοῖς, ἢ διάστασις. Τοῦτο
γούν νῦν ἀσπαστέον, τοῦτο δεῖ πᾶσιν εἶναι
405 εὐπρόσιτον, τοῦτο τῶν φθαρτῶν πραγμάτων
ἀποδιίστησι τὴν ψύχην καὶ πρὸς ἐντελέχειαν
τῶν ἀφθάρτων οὐσιοῖ ἐαυτὴν διὰ τῆς καθάρσεως P 125v
τῆς ἐξ ἀρετῶν, τοῦτο ῥύμην ἀναστέλλει κακίας,
τοῦτο θραύει τὰ τῶν ζωϊκῶν δυνάμεων ὁρμήματα A 90r
410 τῆς ψυχῆς, τοῦτο πᾶν ἀγαθὸν δωρεῖται τοῖς
ἀγαθοῖς. Καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν οἶδεν ἕτερον ἐμποιεῖν
πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀρετὴν, ἢ τὸ συνομιλεῖν αὐτὴν
ψυχαῖς ἀγαθαῖς. Καὶ γὰρ ὁμιλίας κακαὶ χρηστὰ
φθεῖρουσι διαβούλια. Διότι καὶ πρὸς Ἄδου ἄξονα
415 ἢ τῶν πονηρῶν βουλὴ καταντᾷ καὶ ὀλεθρον
φέρει καὶ ἄτιμον διάλυσιν προξενεῖ, μηδὲν ὅλως
ἀρετῆς εὐφημίαν τῷ βουλομένῳ παρέχουσα. Ὡς

414 πρὸς Ἄδου ἄξονα cf. Prov. 2:18

390 τμήμα θ' A : τοῦ αὐτοῦ τμήμα δέκατον· ι' P | 402
μηδέν] μὴ δὲν P εἶναι] εἶεναι P | 416 φέρει om.
P προξενεῖ A

by the way of virtue, simplicity of conduct, and purification for the purpose of apprehending and uniting with the existent.²² Thus is the soul honored, thus it also becomes firm, and pulls itself away from the temporal and worldly corruption of life, attains a better state, and takes intellectual delight in forever contemplating divine ideas.

X. What is this then? Time passes, lives become extinct, and the human race goes along with the flow. The manifestation of the nonexistent is in the dissolution of things thought to exist, just as the lack of light demonstrates darkness. A distancing from the existent is, on the other hand, the fall of a soul not having divine illumination, the corruption of the things of life (because by nature they belong to corruption, not incorruptibility) and the absolute aberrancy of everything not of the intellect.²³ For stability belongs to no other than the contemplator of God. It is therefore better to conspire with the constant to distance oneself from nonexistent things. For the nonexistent things, the distancing is like nothing happening, because they are thought to exist and be good while they are not good. So this should be espoused now, this should be accessible to all people, this distances the soul from corruptible things and substantiates her toward the actuality of the incorruptible by purification through virtue, this checks the force of evil, this breaks the impulses of the soul's animal powers, this gives everything good to the good. For nothing else can implant virtue in the soul but her association with other good souls. For bad company spoils good plans. Therefore the advice of bad people leads toward the path to Hell, brings perdition and causes shameful ruin, while it does not provide at all the praise of virtue to

22 Theodore defines nobility as a moral category in opposition to nobility of blood also in other works. See his *Representation of the World, or Life*, in Festa, "Κοσμικὴ Διήλωση," 81.1–14; D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge, 2007), 226–34.

23 The noun ἐκτροπή can mean metaphorically "aberrancy" in the works of Theodore Laskaris. See his *Apology to Some of His Friends Pressing Him to Find a Bride*, in Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia, 111.39–40, where the author speaks of his own "aberrancy of bitterness" (ἡ τῆς πικρίας ἐκτροπή). In his *Encomium on the Holy Anargyroi* (Paris, BnF, Cod. gr. 1193, 61v), Theodore Laskaris beseeches the saints to heal "the aberrancy of his soul" (ψυχικὴ ἐκτροπή).

τοῦ θαύματος. Καὶ πάλιν ἐρῶ· τί τοῦτο; Πάντα
 ἤδη φθορᾶς, πάντα πρὸς μείωσιν ἐξορμᾶ, πάντα
 420 τῇ χρονικῇ ὥρᾳ συμπεριφέρεται. Διότι καὶ τῇ P 126r
 στοιχειακῇ σωματικῇ συμπήξει φθορὰ γεγονυῖα,
 διάζευξιν ἐμποιεῖ τοῦ ὕλικου καὶ τοῦ νοεροῦ,
 καὶ τὸ μὲν τῷ συγγενεῖ παραμένειν ποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ
 ἀναφέρεσθαι πρὸς τὴν δεσποτικὴν ἀρχήν, ὥστε
 425 τὸ δουλόσυνον ἐπιπρεπὲς αὐτῇ ἀπονείμει. Οὐδὲ
 γὰρ γενέσθαι τοῦτό ἐστι δυνατόν ἢ φθορᾶς
 προαρξάσης. Διατούτο φθορὰ μὲν φθείρει,
 παγιοῖ δὲ ἀρετῇ. Διὸ τοῖς μὲν ραθύμοις καὶ κατ' A 90v
 ἐμὲ ἐκλελυμένοις ἢ φθορὰ φοβερὰ, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις
 430 καὶ στασίμοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς ἀρετῇ μὲν φοβερὰ,
 φθορὰ δὲ ποθεινὴ, ὡς τῇ ταύτης διαλύσει τοῦ
 κόπου πέρας λαμβάνουσι καὶ τῆς τῶν γερῶν
 ἀντιδόσεως τυγχάνουσιν.

XI. Εἰ φύσις, καὶ κινήσεως ἔναρξις. Εἰ δ' οὐ P 126v
 435 κινήσεως ἔναρξις, οὐδὲ φύσις ἂν ἤρξατο. Εἰ
 δ' οὐκ ἤρξατο, τὸ μὴ ἀρξάμενον οὐδὲ φύσις
 ἐστί. Φύσις καὶ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ κινήσεως καὶ
 ἡρεμίας. Ἄρα εἰ ἐστὶ φύσις, καὶ ἤρξατο. Εἰ δ'
 ἤρξατο, ἡρεμίᾳ γε ἂν, ἵνα τὸ τί ἐστὶ φύσις
 440 ἀποδειχθῇ ἀληθῶς, δηλονότι ἀρχὴ κινήσεως καὶ
 ἡρεμίας. Ταύτης γοῦν τῆς φύσεως ἀρξάμενης,
 τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν πάντα θάλλουσιν, ὡς
 ἐν γενέσει καὶ αὐξήσει ὑπάρχοντα. Μειουμένης A 91r
 δὲ γε καὶ ἡρεμούσης καὶ πρὸς ἀφάντωσιν
 445 τέλεον καταληγούσης, τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ εὐειδῇ καὶ
 εὐπρόσιτα εὐμάραντα καὶ δυσειδῇ γίνονται,
 συναλλαττόμενα τοῖς μὴ οὔσι καὶ φθορᾷ ὄντως
 ὑποπίπτοντά τε καὶ ταπεινούμενα. Τοῖνυν
 πᾶν γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ ὑποκείμενον πλείστην P 127r
 450 μάλα μᾶλλον φέρει τὴν ἀθυμίαν καὶ τὴν πρὸς

the one who aspires to it. Oh, what a wonder! I shall say it again. What is this then? Everything already belongs to corruption, everything rushes toward diminution, everything is carried along by the passing of the seasons. Therefore decay generated by the formation of the elements in the body²⁴ produces separation between matter and intellect, and causes the former to remain near its kin, while making the latter rise toward the realm of the Lord so that it renders to it a suitable servant's tribute. For this can only occur if decay began previously. That is why decay corrupts, but virtue solidifies. Passing away is thus frightful for easy-going and lax people like me, but for others who are steady and good, it is virtue that is awe-inspiring²⁵ and passing away desirable, since it is through dissolution caused by it that they reach the end of their toils and acquire the recompense of rewards.

XI. If there is nature, there is a beginning of motion. If there were no beginning of motion, nature would have had no beginning. If it had no beginning, the thing without beginning is not nature. For nature is the beginning of motion and rest.²⁶ Indeed, if there is nature, it had a beginning also. If it had a beginning, it would come to rest in order to make truly manifest what nature is, namely, the beginning of motion and rest. When nature itself has begun to act, all things in and for the sake of it blossom, being in a state of generation and growth. But when nature contracts, comes to rest, and totally disappears, its pretty and attractive features become withered and unattractive, being replaced with things that are nonexistent, truly falling into decay and becoming humbled. Indeed, everything subject to generation and passing away brings exceeding despondency and ill-

437–38 Aristotle, *Physics*, 200b ff.

421 γεγονυῖα P | 423 τὸ μὲν] τῷ μὲν A τὸ δὲ] τῷ δὲ A | 428 τοῖς μὲν P | 433 τυγχάνουσι P | 434 τμήμα ι' A: τμήμα δέκατον· ι' P | 438–41 ἄρα εἰ ἐστὶ φύσις, . . . ἡρεμίας in mg. A | 438 ἡρεμίας P | 439 τὸ] το P | 442 θάλλουσιν] θάλλουσι P | 444 ἡρεμούσης P

24 The transformation of the elements during generation and passing away is an argument made in Aristotle, *On Coming-to-be and Passing away* (*De generatione et corruptione*), e.g., 321b24–322a2. See also Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Epitome of Physics*, PG 142:1084C–1085B (chap. VI).

25 The sentence plays on the multiple connotations of the adjective φοβερός, meaning both frightful, but also “awe-inspiring,” “wonderful.”

26 The relationship between nature and motion is central to Aristotle's *Physics*. See also Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Epitome of Physics*, PG 142:1089B (chap. VII).

τὴν ψυχὴν ἀδοξίαν, ἢ χαρὰν πρόσκαιρον καὶ
 ἡδονῆς μέρος βραχὺ ρέον. Διατοῦτο θάλλει μὲν
 φύσις ἀνθρωπίνη, φθίνει δὲ ἐν καιρῷ, μὴδὲν
 ἀποδέουσα χόρτου καὶ χλόης φυτῶν καὶ ἄνθους
 455 παραδρομῆς. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν μεγίσταις τιμαῖς τε καὶ
 ὑψηλαῖς προκαθημένη καὶ τῶν τῶν ὁμοδούλων
 ψυχῶν, ἢ, ὡς εἰπεῖν, τῶν ζωτικῶν δυνάμεων,
 αὐτὴ κυριεύουσα καὶ κατασταθμίζουσα ταύταις
 τὰ δόματα καὶ αὐτεξουσιότητος προσωπεῖον,
 460 ὥσπερ εἰπεῖν, μορφουμένη, δούλη θανάτῳ
 αὐτομάτως ἀποκαθίσταται, μὴ βοηθουμένη
 ἐν τινὶ ἄρωγῳ. Ποῦ χρήματα; Ποῦ δὲ βίου
 περιουσία; Ποῦ συμπατρία τῶν ὁμοψύχων; A 91v
 Ποῦ δέ γε τὸ τῆς δόξης ὑψηλὸν καὶ βασιλικόν;
 465 Ποῦ τῶν εὐεργετηθέντων βοήθεια, ἢ τῶν
 ἐλεηθέντων σύναρσις; Ποῦ χεῖρες παλαμναίων P 127v
 ὑπερασπίζουσαι, ἢ νεῦρα δύναιμι δαψιλεύοντα;
 Ποῦ δούλων συνασπισμός, ἢ φίλων ἀνταπόδοσις
 φιλική; Ποῦ τέκνων βοηθείας ὑπακοή, ἢ γονέων
 470 τέκνοις δύνاميς βοηθοῦσα; Πάντα ἄπρακτα,
 πάντα κενά, πάντα πολὺ τοῦ τῆς βοηθείας
 σκοποῦ ἀποδιίστάμενα. Διὸ γεννηθεὶς μὲν ὁ
 ἄνθρωπος ὁρᾷ πρὸς φθοράν, φθαρεὶς δὲ μᾶλλον
 ὁρᾷ πρὸς τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν, στρεφόμενος κυκλικῶς
 475 καὶ φθορᾷ ζωῆς εὐμοιρῶν. Διατοῦτο τῇ χρονικῇ
 στροφῇ τὰ πράγματα συναλλοιούμενα καὶ
 στρεφόμενα συμπεριφέρουσι καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον,
 χλοάζοντα μὲν προσκαίρως, ὠκυμάραντον δὲ
 τῇ φύσει γε ὄντα· τῷ τοι καὶ τῷ τῆς ἀρχῆθεν
 480 μακρᾶς συνηθείας ἐκπτώματι ὁ ἄνθρωπος
 τιτρωσκόμενος, μᾶλλον εὐχείρωτός ἐστι πρὸς A 92r
 φθοράν, ὡς ὢν φθορᾶς τέλος καὶ ὑποκείμενον. P 128r

XII. Ἐγεννήθην ἐν ἡμέρας φωτὶ καὶ ἐν
 κοσμικῇ κοιλάδι, ἐξετράφην τῇ ἡδονῇ ἄρνα
 485 μιμούμενος τὸν ἀπόνηρον. Διὸ καὶ τρυφῶν
 καὶ τερπόμενος καὶ μεγίστης εὐμοιρίας
 ἐπαπολαύων, οὐκ ἐμνήσθην καὶ δυσπραγίας.

454 χόρτου cf. Is. 40:6–7 | 484–85 ἄρνα μιμούμενος τὸν
 ἀπόνηρον cf. Jer. 11.19; Lev. 1:10

456–57 τῶν τῶν ὁμοδούλων ψυχῶν A^PC^P : τὰς τῶν
 ὁμοδούλων ψυχᾶς A^{ac} | 457 τῶν ζωτικῶν δυνάμεων A^PC^P
 : τὰς ζωτικὰς δυνάμεις A^{ac} | 458 αὕτη P | 473 φθαρεὶς
 δὲ P | 478 προσκαίρως | προσφόρως P | 483 τμήμα ια' A
 : τμήμα δωδέκατον P

repute in regard to the soul rather than ephemeral joy and fleetingly brief period of pleasure. This is why human nature both blossoms and fades away over time, differing in no way from grass, the foliage of plants, and the withering of a flower. For even as human nature presides in matters of high and greatest distinction, rules over the souls of fellow-slaves (or, so to speak, over their life-giving capacities), measures out for them its gifts, and assumes, so to speak, a mask of independence, it is unexpectedly reinstated as a slave by death and finds no aid in any helper. Where is money? Where is the abundance of livelihood? Where is the company of soul mates? Where is the height and majesty of glory? Where is the help from those who have received benefactions or the assistance of recipients of charity? Where are the hands to defend against murderers or the strength-giving muscles? Where is the protection of servants? Where is the friendly return of favor by friends? Where is the helpful obedience of children or the power of parents to help their children? All are unprofitable, all are in vain, all are far removed from the goal of assistance. So the human being, once born, faces corruption, but once dead he rather faces incorruptibility, revolving in a circle and having a good share in life's corruption. Therefore circumstances that change and reverse with the passage of time carry along with them the human being as well, who blossoms temporarily but is by nature quick to wither away. In this wise, being wounded through his fall from his original state of long ago,²⁷ the human being is easily overcome at the hands of corruption, for he is both the end and substance of corruption.

XII. I was born in the light of day and in a worldly valley. I was brought up in pleasure like an innocent lamb. Living thus in luxury, enjoying myself and benefiting from the greatest good fortune, I gave no heed to misfortune, but taking delight, so to speak,

27 An allusion to the Fall.

Ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ, ὡς εἰπεῖν, τερπόμενος τῇ ἐμῇ,
 ἐπορευόμην μεστὸς πάσης ἀγαθωσύνης. Τί καὶ
 490 γὰρ ὅλως οὐκ ἔσχον τῶν ἀγαθῶν; Ποῖον δέ γε οὐκ
 ἐπλούτουν τῶν ὀρεκτῶν; Πάντων πλησμίως καὶ
 δαψιλῶς τὴν ἐμὴν καρδίαν ἐνέπλησα, ἑτερπόμην A 92v
 ἐτέρᾳ κλήσει καλεῖν αὐτὴν κρίνει ὁ λογισμός, ἢ
 495 τῇ τῆς ἰσοψυχίας καὶ ὁμοζωίας. Ὡ τοῦ δεινοῦ μου
 συμβάματος. Τί εἶπω; Τὴν ψυχὴν διαρρήγνυμαι. P 128v
 Τί λαλήσω τὸν τῆς φωνῆς κτύπον διασπέρων ἐν
 ἀπωλείᾳ; Τί βοήσομαι τὴν διάρθρωσιν τῆς ἡχοῦς
 ἄσσημα ἐξαποστέλλων καὶ δύσφημα; Παντοίως
 500 ὄντως κεκλόνημαι, ὅτι καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς
 ἀνάστημα γενναῖον εἶπερ εἶπη τις. Εὐμοιρῶ τῶν
 ἐξ ἐμοῦ εὐπαθόντων, ἀλλ' οὖν τῷ πάθει ῥέμβομαι
 ἀκρατῶς τούτῳ συμπαθαινόμενος. Κατέσχε
 με συμφορὰ ἀπαράκλητος, σκώληξ πιέζει μου
 505 τὰ ὁστὰ συντήκων τὴν ἁρμονίαν, χίμαιρα
 φλέγει με λογισμῶν, ὕδρα πολυμόρφωτον
 καὶ πολύκρανον τέρας τῶν ἐνθυμήσεων τοῖς
 ὁδοῦσι διαξέει μου τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀσπὶς πόνου
 τιτρώσκει τὰ ἔγκατα· δράκων οὐσιώδης, ἢ
 510 λύπη με δαπανᾷ· βασιλίσκος παθῶν δουλοῖ τὸ P 129v
 βασιλικὸν ἐλευθεριότητος τῆς ἐμῆς· ἀντὶ τοῦ
 ἐπιβῆναι με, συμπατοῦμαι· ἀντὶ τοῦ συνθλᾶν, A 93r
 καταθλάττομαι· ἀντὶ τοῦ ὑψαυχενεῖν με ταῖς
 τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ εὐτυχημάτων μεγαλειότησι,
 515 δυσπραγῶ· ἀτυχῶ πασῆς ἀτυχίας νῦν ὄντως τὸ

497–98 ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ Prov. 10:24, 13:1, 13:15; Ps. Sol. 9:5, 17:22

491 πάντων A^{PCP} : πάντα A^{ac} | 492 ἐνέπλησα A^{PCP} : ἐνεπλησαν A^{ac} | 493 τῇ ἐμῇ ψυχῇ καὶ ὁμοψύχῳ A^{PCP} : τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ὁμόψυχον A^{ac} | 497 διασπέρων P | 502 οὖν P | 503 τούτῳ τοῦτο P

in my own soul, I was running the course of my life
 replete with all goodness. For what good thing did
 I not fully have at my disposal? With what objects
 of desire was I not richly endowed? I filled my heart
 completely and abundantly with everything. I felt
 utmost joy in my soul and in my soul mate²⁸—for
 speech cannot call her by any other name than “a
 like soul” and “a sharer of my life.”²⁹ Oh, terrible
 calamity! What can I say? I am torn apart in my
 soul. What shall I utter as I pour out the sound
 of my voice in my loss? What shall I cry out as I
 articulate unintelligible and ill-omened sounds? I
 am really absolutely shaken, even if someone should
 say that the constitution of the soul is brave. An
 abundance of people have received my benefaction,
 but I wander about powerlessly, suffering this afflic-
 tion. An inconsolable misfortune has seized me. A
 worm presses on my bones, causing their joints to
 dissolve.³⁰ A chimera of thoughts burns me up. A
 hydra of reflections—a many-shaped and many-
 headed monster—tears my soul with its teeth.³¹ A
 viper of pain is devouring my entrails. Sorrow, a ver-
 itable dragon, consumes me. A basilisk of suffering
 enslaves the imperial character of my free spirit.³²
 Instead of stepping on top, I am trampled under-
 foot. Instead of crushing, I am crushed to pieces.
 Instead of raising my head because of great virtues

28 Nikephoros Blemmydes describes Elena as the “soul mate of the beloved” (cf. below, line 542). See *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, Appendix III: *Nicephori Epistulae*, ep. 2.27–28 at 293. Theodore Laskaris uses the expression “soul mate” (cf. above, line 463) in reference also to his male correspondents and friends, such as Blemmydes, Mouzalon, and Akropolites. See *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, ep. 27.4 at 36; ep. 39.17 at 49; ep. 206.11–19 at 257; Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia, 4.52, 7.132.

29 Theodore Laskaris calls George Mouzalon “a like soul” and “a sharer of his life” in letters composed after Elena’s death. See *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, ep. 206.18 at 257; ep. 214.45–46 at 266.

30 The rare meaning of ἁρμονία as “joining of two bones” occurs in Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:7–10). See also *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae*, ed. Festa, ep. 11.12–13 at 15. Cf. below, line 531.

31 In his *Apology* against remarriage Theodore Laskaris refers to the traps set by “the hydra consisting of many parts” (ὕδρα πολυμερής). See Theodore Laskaris, *Opuscula rhetorica*, ed. Tartaglia, 114.98.

32 The basilisk (Psalm 90 [91]:13; Isaiah 59:5) was understood to be a poisonous reptile. Note the play on words.

ὑπερκείμενον. Οἱμοι, οἱμοι· τὸ ἔαρ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς
 μου ἀπόλωλε. Ναυαγῶ, τὰ τῆς σωτηρίας ἐλπίδος
 ἀπέγνωνκα. Πάντα ῥέπουσι πρὸς φθοράν. Καὶ
 γὰρ λυθείσης μου τῆς ζωῆς, ὁ ψυχικὸς καὶ
 520 σωματικὸς ἀναγκαίως ἐλύθη μου σύνδεσμος.
 Εἰ δὲ καὶ τις εἶπη νομίζεσθαι τοῦτον διακρατεῖν,
 ἀλλ' οὖν οὐχ' οὕτως ἔσται. Πῶς γὰρ ψυχῆς
 λυθείσης, νοὸς μεταβληθέντος, τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν
 τῆς ἀγάπης ἀμαυρουμένων μὲν ἀλλ' οὖν
 525 αἰσθητῶς (νοερωτέως καὶ γὰρ ἦν ὅλως τοῦτο
 ἀδύνατον), πασῶν τῶν ψυχικῶν δυνάμεων P 129v
 ἀλλοιουμένων, ἑτερόν τι σωματικὸν μέρος ἢ
 μέλος τῷ σώματι ἀπαθὲς ἐναπολειφθῆ; Ὅντως
 οὐδέν. Καί γε καὶ σῶμα νεκρὸν πρὸς χρόνον εἶναι
 530 νομίζεται ἄχρις οὗ τέλεον παραδοθῇ τῇ φθορᾷ. A 93v
 Καὶ ἡ ἐμὴ δὲ οὐσία καὶ σύγκρασις καὶ ἀρμονία
 εἶναι μὲν τανῦν ἐν ζωῇ νομίζονται, ἀλλὰ τὴν
 νεκρῶν χώραν καταλαμβάνουσι. Δακρύσατε
 ὀφθαλμοί, στέρνον διαρράγηθι, καρδία δέξαι
 535 διάλυσιν, χεῖρες ριζοτομήθητε ἀρμοτεμνόμεναι
 συνεχῶς, πόδες νευροτρώτῳ νοσήματι τὴν
 διάλυσιν πάθετε, βράδυνον γλῶττα, ἡ ὡς
 ἀληθῶς καὶ νεκρώθητι, ὦτα καὶ ὄσφρησις καὶ
 ἀφή καὶ πάντα λιθώθητέ μου τὰ αἰσθητήρια, καὶ
 540 ὅλον τὸ σῶμα σὺν τοῖς ἐντός τε καὶ τοῖς ἐκτός
 θανάτου κέρδησον πάθημα, συννόκησον ἐν τῷ P 130r
 Ἄδη ὁμοψύχῳ τῇ σῇ συναλγούν. Καὶ γὰρ δεσμός
 ἀγάπης τῆς ἀσυγκρίτου πάντων ἀνθρώπων
 εὐτυχεστέρους ἡμᾶς ἐναπέδειξεν, ἀλλὰ χεῖρ
 545 Ἄδου ληστρικὴ καὶ ὠμὴ ἀνημέρως ἔτεμε τὸν
 δεσμόν. Τί πάθω; Οὐδὲν ἄλλο, ἢ τῆς ζωῆς μου
 λύσιν αἰτήσομαι. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλως ἔστι δυνατὸν
 τοῦτο γενέσθαι, ἢ πρὸς θανάτου με καταντῆσαι A 94r
 οἰκήματα, καὶ Ἄδου δέξασθαι τιμωρίαν καὶ
 550 μειώσεως πάθημα, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῆς ζωῆς μου
 ἐστέρημαι, τῆς ψυχικῆς τε πνοῆς καρδιακῆς τέ
 μου συστάσεως καὶ τῆς τῆς ζωῆς μου σωτηρίας,
 ψυχικῆς ὁμοῦ καὶ σωματικῆς.

and happiness, I am hapless. Now I have suffered
 a misfortune that indeed surpasses all misfortune.
 Woe to me, woe to me! The springtime of my soul
 has died. I am shipwrecked and have given up hope
 of deliverance. Everything falls to corruption. For
 when my life comes to an end, the bond of my soul
 and body has by necessity been loosened. Even if
 someone should say that the bond is thought to
 continue, this will not be so. For once the soul has
 been released, the intellect transformed, the eyes
 of love blinded but in a perceptible way (for this
 could in no way happen in the realm of the intel-
 lect), and all spiritual powers changed, would any
 other bodily part or limb be left unaffected in the
 body? Surely none. Indeed, the body is thought to
 be dead for some time before being fully consigned
 to decay. My essence, bodily constitution and frame
 are considered now to be among the living, but they
 occupy the land of the dead. My eyes, shed your
 tears! My chest, be broken up! My heart, accept
 dissolution! My arms, be torn out as your shoulder
 joints are broken all along! My legs, suffer dissolu-
 tion through injury to the sinews! My tongue, slow
 down or be dead in truth! My ears and senses of
 smell and touch and all my organs of perception, be
 turned to stone! And you, my whole body with its
 inner and outer parts, gain the suffering of death,
 dwell in Hades together with your soul mate in
 order to share her pain. For a bond of incomparable
 love made us happier than all people, but the thiev-
 ing and cruel hand of Hades cut the bond merci-
 lessly. What should I suffer? I will ask nothing but
 the end of my life. This cannot happen in any other
 way but by descending into the abodes of death and
 accepting the punishment of Hades and the afflic-
 tion of diminution, because I have been deprived of
 my life, my soul's spirit and heart's substance, and
 the salvation of my life, both spiritual and corporal.

541-42 cf. Ps. 87:5-6

517 τὰ] τὸ P | 520 μου] μο P | 523 μεταβληθέντος
 AP^cP ὀφθαλμῶν P | 544 ἐναπέδειξεν AP^cP : ἀπέδειξεν
 A^{ac} | 547 ἄλλως ἐστὶ P | 552 τῆς τῆς] τῆς P